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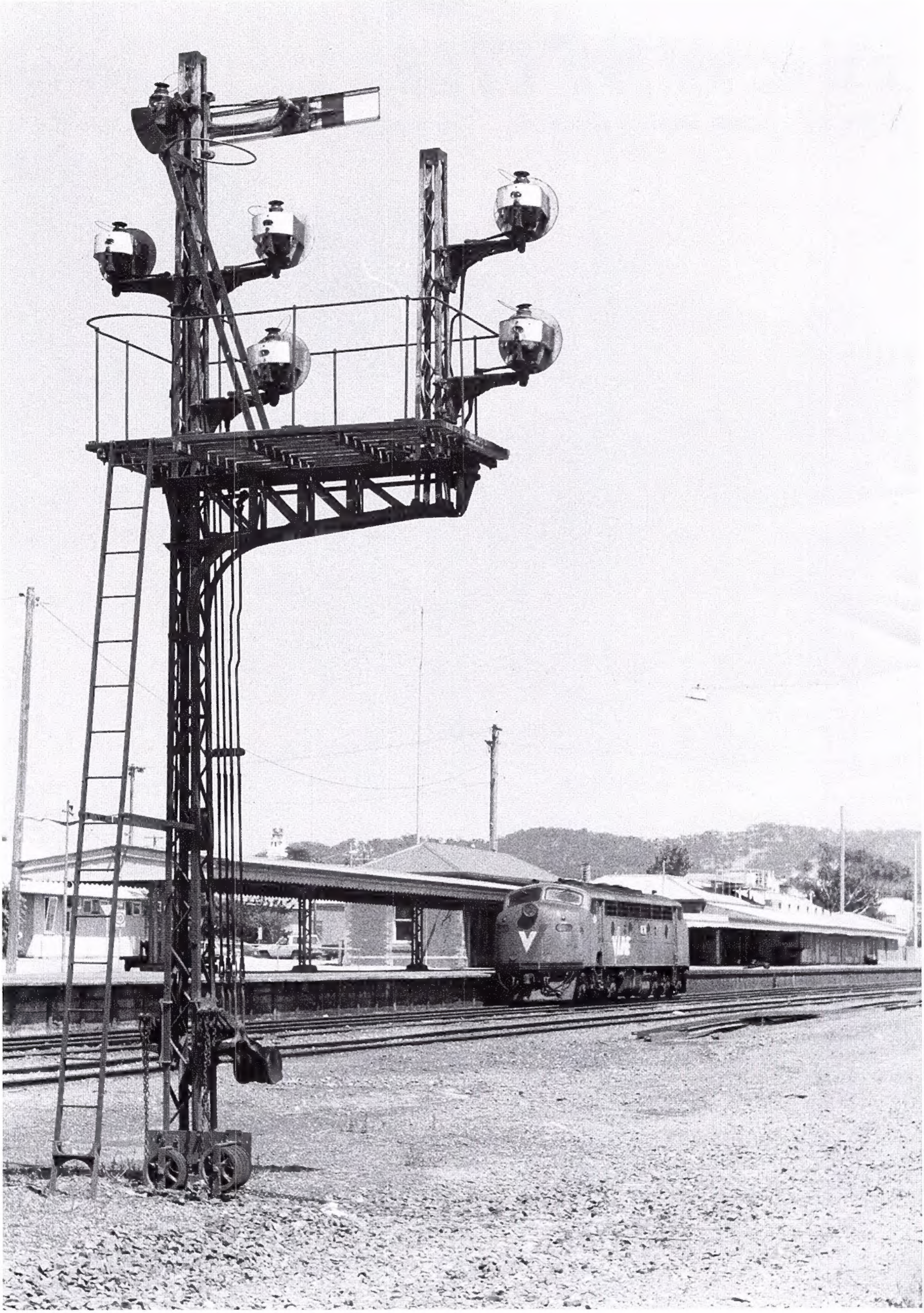
V/Line

FOR ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN RAILWAYS

Newsrail

Vol. 17 No. 5 May 1989

Feature Articles

Swan Hill Bike Specials 132
V/Line or V/Road? 136
V/Line Future Directions 142
Portland First Fleet Tour 144
Official Opening of Echuca Bridge 19.3.89 . 157

Regular Features

General News 145
Operations 146
Works 155
Rollingstock 155
Preservation 158
Taildisc 159

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Cover: N459-N475 leading No.8079, the fifth bike special to Swan Hill approaches Elphinstone tunnel on Sat.3.12.88. (Bryce Leydon)

Opposite: B76 waits at Ararat while the Dynon crews have 'tucker' on No.9104 up light loco to Melbourne via Cressy. The trip was to enable Dynon crews to 'learn the road' from Ararat to Gheringhap. Wed.1.2.89. (Gavin McLaughlan)

Swan Hill Bike Specials

RODERICK B SMITH

In its fifth year the Great Victorian Bike Ride attracted 4000 riders, the most yet, despite the holding of the Sydney-Melbourne Bicentenary Ride simultaneously. The route had a rivers theme, following the Murray, Campaspe, Lerderderg and Werribee rivers and finishing at Batman Park on the Yarra River. Overnight stays were at Lake Boga, Cohuna, Echuca, Colbinabbin, Castlemaine, Kyneton and Bacchus Marsh. A highlight was the crossing of the Murray by the paddle-steamer *Pevensey* or *Emmy-Lou.*

To position the cyclists on Sat.3.12.88, V/Line provided six double-set special trains to Swan Hill, the greatest distance yet for the five GVBRs and the greatest number of sets. (1984/6/7 had 9; 1985 had 7.) The first, second and sixth specials had a 5-car S set and an N set with D vans, were allowed to run at 115 km/h and were advertised by the organisers as having a working snack-bar each. The third, fourth and fifth specials had two H sets and freight vans and were allowed to run at 95 km/h. Schedules were tight, unlike during the preceding four years.

The specials were to be:

8071: Spencer Street 06 30; Bendigo 08 30-5; Eaglehawk 08 44-52 (x pass. ('x' means 'cross')); Swan Hill 10 57.

8073: Spencer Street 06 55; Bendigo 08 56-09 01; Eaglehawk 09 10-20 (wait line clear); Swan Hill 11 28.

8075: Caulfield 06 50; Spencer Street 07 12; Bendigo 09 32-40; Eaglehawk 09 49-50 (wait line clear); Swan Hill 12 05.

8077: Spencer Street 08 53; Bendigo 11 16-20; Kerang 12 50-58 (x empty cars); Swan Hill 13 45.

8079: Spencer Street 09 30; Bendigo 11 52-12 15; Pyramid 13 18-25 (x empty cars); Swan Hill 14 40.

8081: Spencer Street 10 30; Castlemaine 12 04-15 (pick up); Bendigo 12 41-45; Pyramid 13 48-57 (x empty cars and wait line clear); Swan Hill 15 15.

With the 07 45 Kyneton and the 08 35 Bendigo regular trains, there were eight departures in four hours. The organisers insisted that pedals be removed from bikes, making loading and unloading faster, resulting in less damage and enabling each van to carry more bikes. At Swan Hill people were told to unload any bike rapidly, after which there was a major unscrambling on the lawn outside.

At Swan Hill the trains were to be shunted substantially to form five empty carriage workings, with the freight vans being left behind. These trains were:

8070: D van, N set from 8071, S set from 8071, S set from 8073; Swan Hill 12 10; Pyramid 13 22-14 15 (x two specials); Bendigo 15 16-20; Spencer Street 17 20.

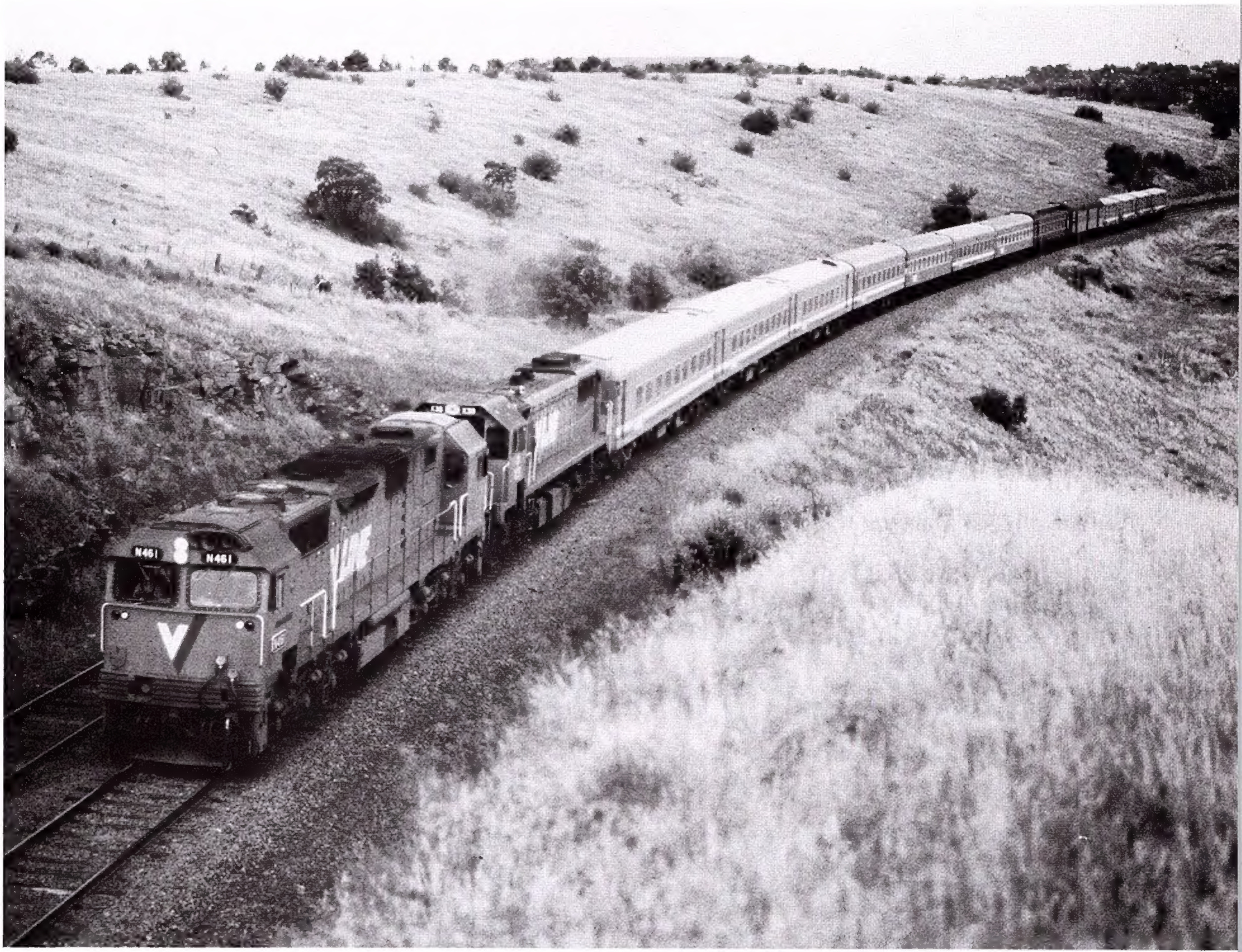
8072: Two H sets from 8075, PH, five D vans from 8071/3; Swan Hill 16 00; Bendigo 18 11-5; Spencer Street 20 25.

8074: PH, two H sets from 8077, PH, H set from 8079; Swan Hill 16 30; Bendigo 18 42-45; Spencer Street 20 55.

8076: H set from 8079, S set from 8081, six D vans from 8073/81; Swan Hill 17 00; Bendigo 19 12-15; Spencer Street 21 25.

8078: Three D vans from 8073/81, N set from 8073, N set from 8081; Swan Hill 17 30; Bendigo 19 42 (terminated).

A79-X52 roar into Macedon on the first of the bike specials, 8071 at 07 26 on Sat.3.12.88. (Gavin McLaughlan)



N461-X38 on 8073, the second bike special, climbs Sunbury bank at 07 30. (Bryce Leydon)

On the day, organisation at Spencer Street was efficient and all trains departed on time. North of Bendigo a temporary speed restriction caused accumulating delays. The most significant effect of this was the prevention of the three sets on 8070 from being in Melbourne in time to form evening departures.

Train 8071, consisting of A79-X52-BN11-BRN44-ACN12-BS205-BS201-BRS226-BS212-ACZ255-D348-D316/53/7-D330, departed platform 2 at Spencer Street at 06 30 and arrived at Swan Hill at 11 20.

Train 8073, N461-X38-BN26-BRN32-ACN27-BS204/10-BRS222-BS209-AE52-CD2-D320-D309/46-D343, departed platform 3 at 06 55, passed Sydenham at 07 18 and arrived at Swan Hill at 11 52.

Train 8075, N451/73-LH33-LH32-PH452-VLCX236/431/625-VLCX141-VLCX58, arrived at platform 14 at Spencer Street ex Caulfield by 07 17, departed at 07 18, passed Sydenham at 07 40 and arrived at Swan Hill at 12 36.

The 07 45 Kyneton, DRC43, departed platform 6 at 07 45 and passed Sydenham at 08 21.

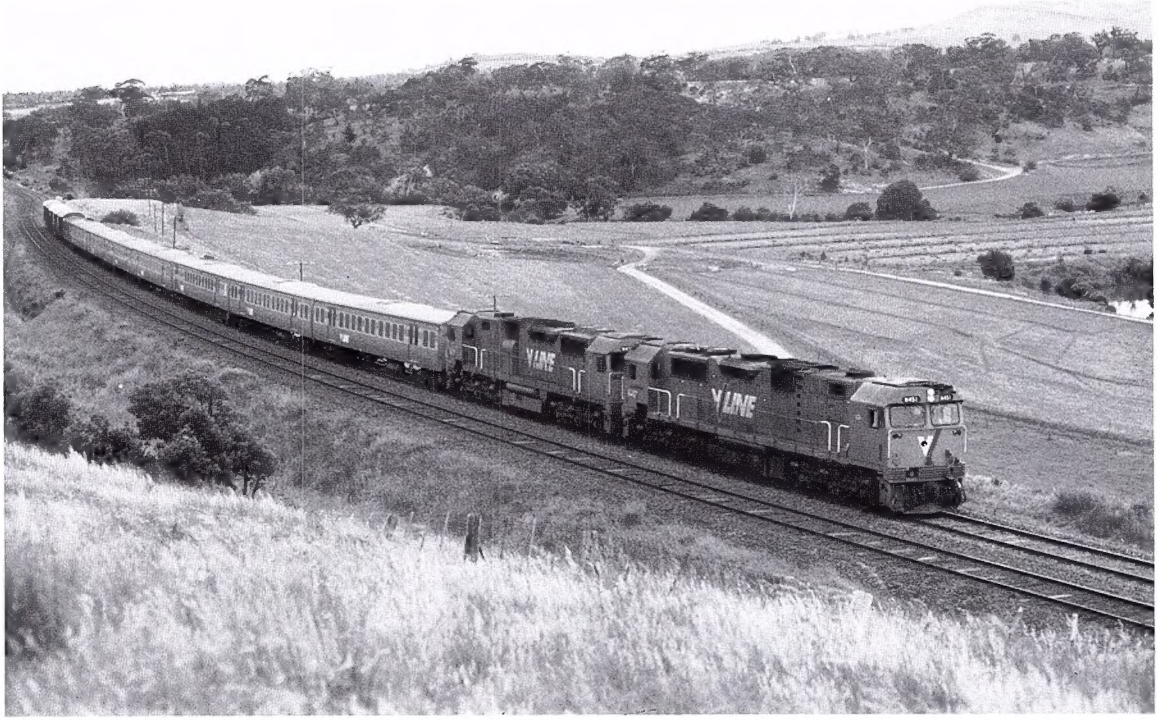
The 08 35 Bendigo, B64-S317-N11-D, departed platform 4 at 08 35 and passed Sydenham at 09 09.

Train 8077, N463/72-BTH165-BCH122-BTH162-BCH127-BTH167-BH147-BH145-BCH125-PH451-VLCX465-VLCX156/435-VLCX189, docked at platform 3 at 07 05, departed at 08 53, passed Sydenham at 09 27, was at Kyneton from 10 18 until 10 34 and arrived at Swan Hill at 14 22.

Train 8079, N459/75-BTH169-BH149-BCH129-BTH164-BH144-BCH124-PH453-ALGX4-VLCX546-VLCX427, docked at platform 7 at 08 27, departed at 09 30, passed Sydenham at 09 54 and arrived at Swan Hill at 15 00.

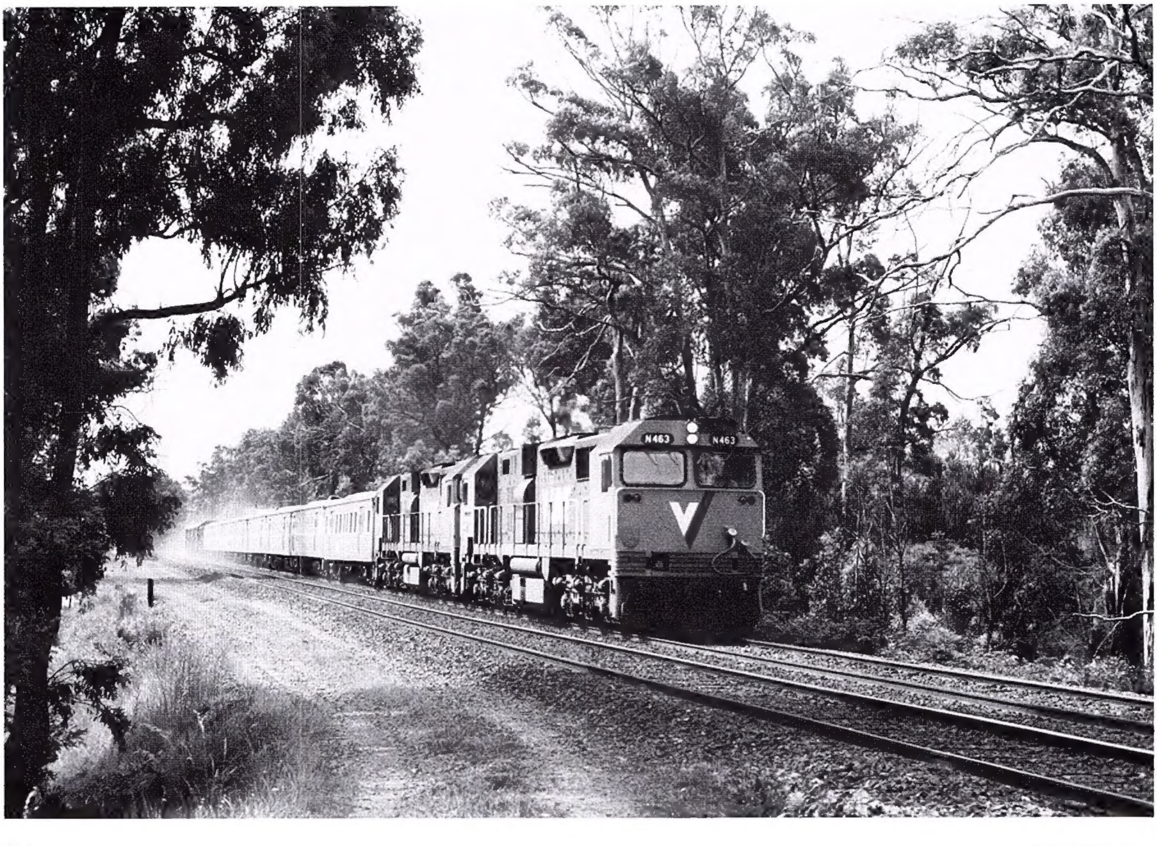
Train 8081, X43-N457-BN14-BRN41-ACN42-BS213-BS211-BRS227-BS208-ACZ253-D319/49-D339-D324/51 (sets and vans from the 06 50 up Bendigo, due at 09 05), arrived at platform 3 at 09 10, departed at 10 29 and arrived at Swan Hill at 15 40.

A noticeable feature at Spencer Street was the number of cyclists and bikes arriving on regular trains. The 07 39 arrival from Geelong, which was four minutes late, had two D vans and there were many cyclists on board the train. The 08 39 (08 55) arrival from Traralgon had been 10 minutes late at Trafalgar, having lost time at all stations whilst bikes were being loaded. At Warragul 50 bikes were left behind as the van was full. The bikes came up on the 06 05 up Bairnsdale, due at 10 11, and did not delay the departure of the 10 30 special. The 09 19 arrival from Leongatha also had many cyclists.



Above: The third bike special hauled by N451-N473 on Sunbury bank.

Below: N463-N472 with the fourth bike special on Macedon bank at 10 03 on Sat.3.12.88. (Both photos Bryce Leydon)



The locomotives for the empty carriage workings were:

8070: X52-A79-X38-N461
8072: N473-N451
8074: N472-N463
8076: N475-N459
8078: N457-X43.

The provision of 12 sets was surprisingly simple. Of 12 H sets, only two have an all-day roster on Saturday and a third set is spare after 08 20. Three sets were brought empty from Bacchus Marsh, two from Kyneton and one from Seymour. Effectively, these formed 8075, 8077 and 8079. Two sets which would have been idle at Spencer Street had formed the 20 05 Ballarat and 22 30 Geelong on Friday night, releasing the 5-car S sets for 8071 and 8073. By using the 3-car Z set from the *Vinelander* arrival on Saturday to form the 08 35 Dimboola, an N set was released for 8071. A spare N set was used for 8073. The 5- car S set from the 09 05 Bendigo arrival has no other duty until Sunday, and so was spare for 8081. The N set which is normally spare at Bendigo on Saturday was brought to Melbourne, ran to Swan Hill, and then returned to Bendigo. To provide a set for the 08 10 down Albury, an N set was taken from the Geelong line, replaced in turn by the continued working of an SH set.

The failure of the empty cars to arrive by the evening peak was presumably balanced by continuing to run the H sets on the Geelong line, and possibly using the E set for a Geelong run. There was no need to provide a double set on the 18 30 Bendigo (the balance being achieved by the empty working from Swan Hill).

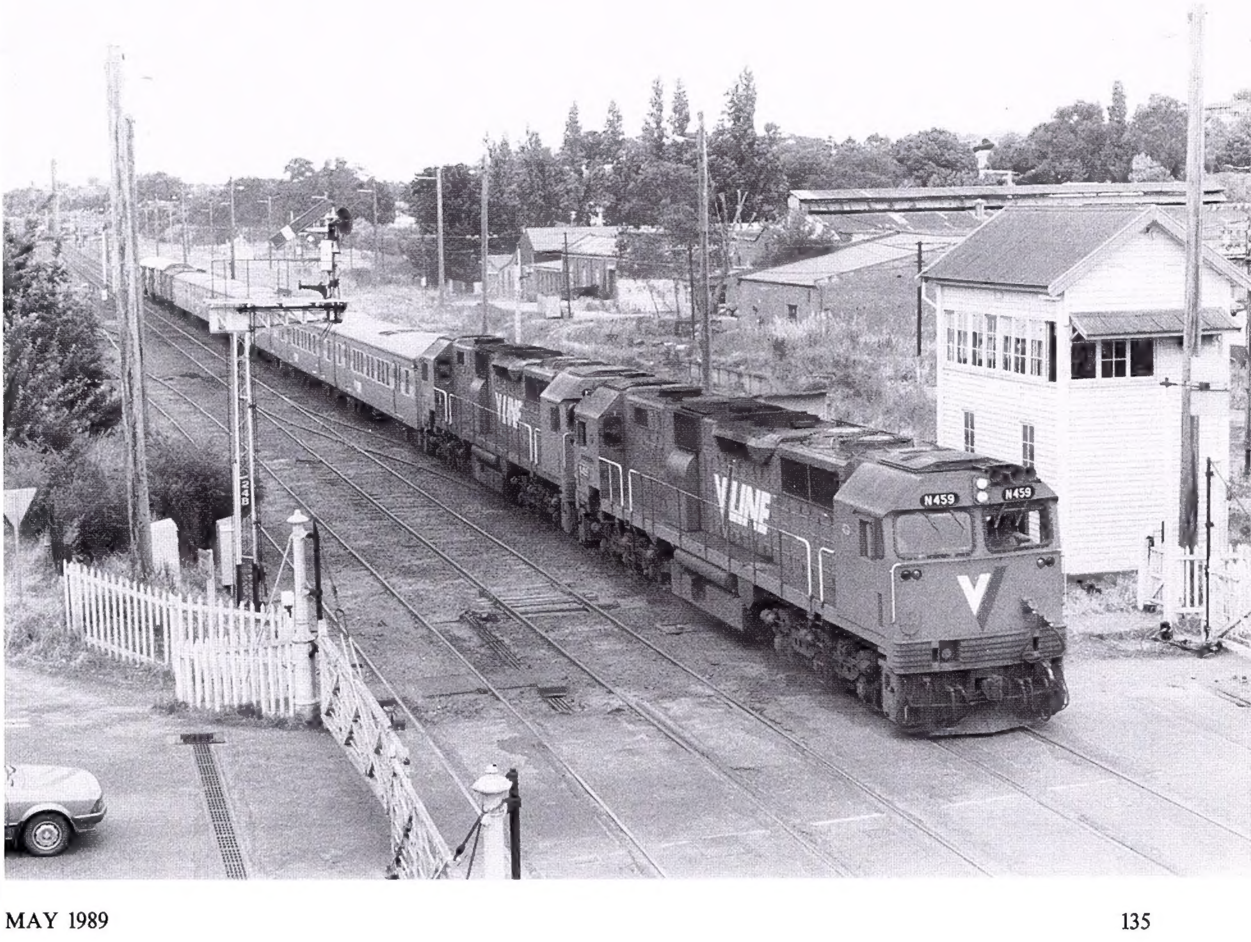
Because so many N class locos were sent to Swan Hill, locos of lesser power were used on some regular trains. The 08 10 Albury had S307-X47, the 08 25 Dimboola had X35, the 08 35 Bendigo had B64-S317 and the 08 35 Warrnambool had X36.

At the conclusion of the ride, to return cyclists to Bendigo on Sun.11.12 the 16 10 Bendigo had a double set: P13-BTH165-BCH122-BTH162-BCH127-BTH167-BH147-BH145-BCH125-DH404-DH401-P15.

It has been announced that the 1989 GVBR will start in Yarrawonga, with a route via Mt Beauty and Nagambie. More than 4000 participants are expected, so another interesting day of train operation is assured.

Sightings for this compilation were provided by Jack McLean, Peter Clymo, Graeme Crichton, Andrew Harding, Frances Evans and the author. The previous bike articles are: 1984 (Wodonga) — Feb.85 p.56; 1985 (Wodonga) — Feb.86 p.36 and Apr.86 p.116; 1986 (Bairnsdale) — May 87 p.134; 1987 (Stawell) — Apr.88 p.100.

N459-N474 pass Castlemaine B Box on 8079 bike special to Swan Hill at 11 35. (Gavin McLaughlan)



V/Line or V/Road?

ANDREW J McLEAN

Brief mention was made in November *Newsrail* of STAP, the State Transport Authority Plan Draft Final Report. STAP considered five possible scenarios for the future of V/Line passenger and freight services, and then tried to evaluate the costs and benefits of each. In the author's opinion, the report is seriously flawed, with a heavy anti-rail bias. If the 'pro-rail' scenarios are the best that the V/Line 'brains trust' can muster, then perhaps the future of V/Line passenger services is indeed as grim as the pro-bus lobby would wish.

Just four passenger scenarios were evaluated, and are as follows:

1/2. All services provided by bus.
3. Continuation of current V/Line directions (i.e. substantial expansion of bus services 'in lieu of rail').
4. Continued support for and improvement of rail, relegating buses to 'a minor role', and
5. Expansion of rail through 'system upgrading and reduction of transit times to be competitive with road transport'.

Table 1 shows the estimated capital costs (in 1985-86 $ million) for the period 1987-2002:

Table 2 shows the estimated annual revenues and operating costs (in 1985-86 $ million).

One can only wonder at how some of the above figures were obtained. Upgrading from Scenario 3 to Scenario 4, for example, STAP claims that after spending $142 million *extra* on new rollingstock, and lowering the fares, patronage would *drop* 2%! In other words, STAP says that if today's trains are upgraded, fewer people will travel!

It is not surprising then that STAP concluded that 'the expenditures required to attract and service additional passengers on rail are not covered by the additional revenue generated'. In coming to these conclusions, STAP has based its entire case on three fundamental assumptions:

1. Buses are at least as fast as trains.
2. Decreasing rail journey times would be extraordinarily expensive, and
3. The cheapest train to buy and run is a loco on three cars.

All three assumptions are patently wrong.

1. HOW FAST ARE BUSES?

It does indeed seem strange that the authors of a V/Line report had to look to NSW to find their 'superior' bus services that they wish to promote, when V/Line already has buses competing with its own trains. Thus STAP claims:

'However, there is evidence from NSW that the passenger market is significantly affected by the introduction of road coach services with superior speed and frequency . . .'.

Why choose the NSW North Coast and Sydney - Canberra? Simply because these two routes have the worst rail alignments that even NSW could devise, and the competing roads are much shorter and give faster journeys. In Victoria it is a completely different story. Table 3 shows the effective (i.e., road) distance, and the running time and average effective speed for the fastest service between Melbourne and each V/Line rail destination:

These speeds can be compared with those managed by present V/Line buses. Table 4 shows the running time, effective distance, and effective speed for the fastest bus on various V/Line InterCity routes:

It is obvious that V/Line buses are much slower than V/Line trains overall, but the best impression is given when trains and buses are compared directly. Table 5 shows the differences between trains and buses on identical routes:

Apart from Mildura and Leongatha, V/Line trains are simply much faster than parallel V/Line buses. When the STAP authors talk of '. . . road coaches with superior speed . . .' it is clear that they have not even bothered to read V/Line's own timetable. Buses may well provide stiff competition on the NSW North Coast, but only because train speeds in NSW are so much lower than in Victoria. Between Sydney and Grafton the best XPT averages an effective 68 km/h, and the best non-XPT a pitiful 59 km/h, considerably worse than 25 years ago!

It would be hard to find a more favourable bus route than Albury - Melbourne. The 09 30 Fridays only bus is the latest 'five star' luxury double decker. It travels along one of Australia's newest and best freeways for much of its journey. After stopping at just Wodonga, Wangaratta, Benalla, and Euroa, it reaches the Spencer Street carpark after a 4 hour 25 minute journey without refreshments. The 12 45 Albury - Melbourne train stops Seymour as well, has refreshments on board, and offers first class accommodation as well as having plenty of space for such awkward items as bicycles, surfboards, prams and wheelchairs. Despite speed limits barely changed since 1937, and the extra Seymour stop, it is an hour faster than the bus. How then does the STAP report conclude that buses could replace trains in Victoria with no loss of speed, quality, or patronage?

2. FASTER TRAINS

STAP certainly gives the impression that making trains 'faster' would be extremely expensive. Thus Scenario 5 quotes a figure of $422 million for 'track improvement', and then claims that this would provide for speeds of 'only 130 km/h'. 160 km/h running, supposedly necessary for 25% reductions in journey times, would cost 'literally hundreds of millions of dollars more'.

Reduced travel times can be accomplished in two basic ways: by increasing the maximum speed allowable, and by reducing the time lost due to restrictions and stops. STAP considered the most expensive way of increasing line speed (new track), and completely ignored the possibility of reducing delays. How seriously can the figure of $422 million (for 130 km/h) and 'hundreds of millions of dollars more' (for 160 km/h and 'train journey times being reduced by 25%') be considered?

Higher Line Speeds

Track in NSW is placed into one of five categories, being Class 1 for the best track down to Class 5 for the worst. Typical speed limits for 422s (equivalent to As, Bs and Ns in Victoria) and XPTs are given in Table 6:

Not surprisingly, modern passenger stock is allowed far higher speeds than heavy freight locomotives and

Table 1: Capital costs

Scenario	Replacement stock	New stock	New track	Asset Release	Total
1/2	0	0	0	–62	–62
3	34	20	0	–12	42
4	122	74	0	0	196
5	122	219	422	0	763

Table 2: Operating Revenues and Costs

Scenario	Million passengers	Fares	Revenue	Cost	Cost recovery (%)
1/2	10.2	high	68	62	111
3	10.4	high	69	118	58
4	10.2	low	65	139	46
5	12.9	low	79	207	38

Table 3: Fastest V/Line trains

Destination	Fastest time	Road km	Effective speed
Warrnambool	3 03	263	86
Dimboola	4 21	334	77
Mildura	9 10	545	59
Swan Hill	4 10	338	81
Cobram	3 21	252	75
Albury	3 25	308	90
Bairnsdale	3 44	281	75
Leongatha	2 11	133	61

Table 4: Fastest V/Line buses

Route	Time	km	Effective speed
Geelong - Warrnambool	2 40	188	71
Melbourne - Mt Gambier	6 20	420	66
Melbourne - Mildura	8 45	545	62
Melbourne - Cobram	3 40	252	69
Melbourne - Albury	4 25	308	70
Albury - Mildura	9 45	616	63

Table 5: Train Versus Bus

Route	Fastest train	Fastest bus
Geelong - Warrnambool	2 07	2 40
Melbourne - Mildura	9 10	8 45
Melbourne - Swan Hill	4 10	5 27
Melbourne - Cobram	3 21	3 40
Melbourne - Albury	3 25	4 25
Melbourne - Leongatha	2 11	2 02

Table 6: NSW Speeds

Section	Class	Speed limits	
Campbelltown - Albury	1	115	160
Joppa Junction - Queanbeyan	2	100	140
West Tamworth - Ben Lomond	3	80	110
Ben Lomond - Wallangarra	4	N/A	90

Table 7: Speeds in the suburbs

	km	Best time	km/h
Spencer Street to Newport	10.6	13	49
Sunshine	12.3	15	49
St Albans	17.8	19	56
Broadmeadows	16.8	18	56
Flinders Street to Dandenong	30.0	31	58

Table 8: Passenger Service Elasticities

Factor	Response
Price	–0.1 to –0.3
Frequency	0.1 to 0.5
Journey time	–0.3 to –0.4

out-of-date bogies, yet STAP seems totally unaware of this. Something is drastically wrong if V/Line engineers really believe that after spending $422 million on track, not one kilometre would be as good as the Class 2 track on the Queanbeyan branch, where modern stock is already allowed 140 km/h. V/Line bought *brand new* passenger locos and cars in the 80s, yet speeds in Victoria are *still* no higher than those allowed in 1937 for locos and cars built as early as 1907.

Reducing Delays

Any serious examination of faster *average* speeds would consider the following means of reducing delays, which in many cases reduce operating costs.

1. Higher curve speeds. Despite some progress in the last couple of years, V/Line curve speeds remain pathetically low. Curve speeds in NSW are typically 20-30 km/h faster than Victorian speeds, and many overseas systems are much faster again.
2. Higher speeds in the suburbs. One of rail's supposedly strong points is its own right of way through crowded cities, but this advantage is almost completely wasted in Victoria by hopelessly slow running in the suburbs. Table 7 shows the fastest country departure to each 'traditional' suburban limit, and the miserable speeds achieved. Of course, many country trains are far worse.
   Why can't 115 km/h be allowed beyond South Kensington, Kensington, and Caulfield? Signalling systems that are compatible with suburban traffic and fast running are perfectly feasible, but in Melbourne only happen by accident. Thus loco-hauled trains may travel between Mordialloc and Frankston at 95 km/h, but at only 80 km/h between Caulfield and Dandenong, and at an incredible 65 km/h on the brand new track between South Kensington and Footscray. These line speeds have nothing to do with track quality, alignment, or suburban train density, but simply reflect management paranoia of high speeds close to town.
3. Elimination of unnecessary restrictions. Victoria has an extraordinary number of unnecessary kinks and curves, and the number is growing all the time. Typical examples are Mangalore, where trains on the 'straight' have an 80 km/h restriction (the parallel standard gauge allows 115 km/h), and Warrenheip, where three out of four moves involve a 40 km/h restriction. Many delays are caused by poor station layouts, particularly platforms on loops. Albury trains in particular lose a considerable amount of time going in and out of loops.
4. Consistent civil engineering practices. Many speed limits in Victoria defy rational analysis, and cause completely pointless delays. A typical suburban example is the subway at Carrum; Ns (123 t) and As (122 t) are allowed 95 km/h, but Bs (123 t) are allowed only 10 km/h. Even stranger, Ns are allowed 115 km/h over three of the bridges on the Bendigo line, while empty Gs (about 118 t, 5 t lighter than Ns) can only be pushed over at 15 km/h!
   Bs used to be allowed to Bairnsdale, but now we have the situation where Xs are allowed (just) to Sale, and the Ns, built specifically for V/Line passenger work, are too heavy to be of any use beyond Traralgon.
5. Fewer stops and smarter timetabling. Station stops typically add two to five minutes to journey times, with as much as ten minutes for the up *Overland* at Sunshine. The Sunshine connection is a classic example of totally unnecessary delay; if the up *Overland* were given 4 hours 53 minutes from Dimboola (the running time for the down, and far too generous anyway) it would arrive Spencer Street at 08 27 and connect easily with the *Daylight,* completely avoiding two unnecessary and lengthy stops.
6. Running via the fastest route. The Mildura service suffers because it uses the longest and slowest of the three practical routes. Running via Castlemaine instead of North Geelong loop would save 44 km and at least 40 minutes, even allowing for reversals at Castlemaine and Maryborough. The *Sunraysia* actually covers 610 km in its 9 hour 10 minute journey for a running average of 67 km/h, which if maintained via Castlemaine would be enough for an 8 hour 30 minute journey, 15 minutes faster than the bus.

3. CHEAPER TRAINS

The argument most likely to sway politicians, of course, is the financial one. STAP says, quite simply, that an all bus service would be about half the cost of the present service, and less than a third the cost of a rail service improved enough to attract additional patronage. Thus it would appear that V/Line themselves believe their own anti-train propaganda. Despite STAP claiming that 'the railway is assumed to be run using the most efficient mix of labour and capital which is technically feasible by 2002', modern railcars have been almost completely ignored. To STAP, the most efficient and modern train possible by 2002 is a loco on three cars running at 115 km/h, and it is hard to imagine a worse use of capital.

This is all the more surprising when Victoria already has a history of 'one-man' railcars, and there seems no logical reason why a railcar should need a larger crew than a double decker bus, where the driver 'supervises' the upper deck with closed circuit television. The four 'modern' railcars in Victoria, while not satisfactorily reliable (due to NSW deliberately choosing a failing contractor for political reasons) are nevertheless extremely fast and comfortable when compared with buses. One only has to look back a decade, when the Ararat - Hamilton DRC was scheduled 72 minutes for 107 km with four intermediate stops (average speed 89 km/h), and compare it with today's 90 minute bus replacement, to realise just how good a truly modern railcar could be.

A new double decker bus might cost $600,000, seat 59 passengers in somewhat cramped conditions, and stay in front rank service about 10 or 12 years. With a 10 litre engine, it takes just under four and a half hours to reach Albury. A modern railcar might cost $2,000,000, seat 90 passengers more comfortably than the bus, and stay in service anywhere up to 50 years. With a 19 litre engine, it could reach Albury in less than three hours, and with track improvements, in 2 hours 30 minutes. The modern railcar, if timetabled imaginatively, can have a productivity two to three times as great as the best bus, and it will certainly last a lot longer. Is such a railcar really twice as dear in the long run?

When comparing the cost of a railcar fleet with a 'small train' fleet, the recent experience of British Rail with 'Sprinters' (modern lightweight railcars) is most enlightening. BR has found that the operating cost of six Sprinters in multiple is less than the cost of a medium power loco on five conventional cars, and that the operating cost of seven Sprinters in multiple is less than a high power loco on six conventional cars. In fact, a two-car Sprinter costs less than half as much to run as the cheapest loco-hauled train. It is little wonder that A G L Shore, in a paper presented to the Rail Division – Institution of Mechanical Engineers, had this to say.

'The underfloor engined DMU in its modern form has shown that it has the ability to make the economics of the marginal railway much more attractive and also to revitalise secondary routes, particularly for shorter trains. Its full potential may still be considerable'.

This is precisely why BR is buying literally hundreds of Sprinters, and why it is so perplexing that STAP appears so totally unaware of such developments.

'SCENARIO 6' – THE SENSIBLE ALTERNATIVE

Although STAP stresses that attracting more people onto rail would be extremely expensive, this is simply not so. STAP gives estimates of 'elasticities' which can be used to gauge the effect of improvements, and these are shown in Table 8:

The *Intercapital Daylight* gets underway from Sunshine on Easter Monday 27.3.89 after its regular stop to connect with the *Overland* from Adelaide (Kevin Payet)

An elasticity of 0.1 suggests that a 10% increase in frequency will lead to a 0.1 x 10% increase in patronage. Although many other factors influence patronage (such as availability of first class, on-board refreshments, capacity for awkward luggage, comfort, and safety) it is not surprising that the way to attract passengers is to increase train frequency, reduce travelling times, and keep prices reasonable. STAP claimed that this could not be done without massive capital expense, but a simple example concentrating on the North-East shows than it can.

Main Line Speeds

Ignoring the kinks at Dysart, Seymour, Mangalore and Creighton, the sharpest curves between Essendon and Wodonga are 800 m radius. In NSW, XPTs are allowed 125 km/h around 800 m curves, and on their infrequent visits, are allowed 130 km/h on straight V/Line track. It is obvious that modern passenger stock should be able to run at or near 130 km/h almost the entire distance to Albury, and that every restriction at present between Essendon and Wodonga is a totally unnecessary waste of time and money. In November 1982, the return of the first XPT to Melbourne took just 2 hours 18 minutes to pass Wodonga from Broadmeadows, after stopping at Seymour and Wangaratta, showing clearly that an express time of about 2 hours 35 minutes and stopping time of around three hours is quite possible with modern stock and only minor track improvements.

Branch Line Speeds

It is often claimed that buses are the only sensible solution for branch lines, as they are cheaper and faster. Buses may well be faster than 60 year old DERMs frustrated by even older safeworking, but they are no match for modern railcars given a clear run. The fastest bus connection arrives at Yarrawonga 71 minutes after the connecting train arrives at Benalla, for an effective speed of 55 km/h. The Ararat - Hamilton DRC was scheduled to average 89 km/h, and on one run the author recorded in Feb.73, DRC 40 *averaged* 97 km/h from Ararat to Hamilton, after stopping for 45, 36, 21 and 38 seconds at the four intermediate stations. This, of course, is on track never considered good enough to allow any loco-hauled train more than 100 km/h. The Hamilton DRC experience shows that a stopping railcar can average 90-100 km/h on medium quality track, if safeworking delays are avoided. Thus a through railcar to Yarrawonga would be 25-30 minutes *faster* than the present connecting bus, as well as being far more convenient.

Putting It All Together

Individual fast runs are one thing, but a successful timetable is another. The specimen (table A) timetable shows what could be achieved at very little capital cost, if only sensible timetabling, civil engineering, and mechanical design all occurred together.

The essential features of this timetable are:

1. Through railcars to Yarrawonga, which sweep the corresponding Albury.
2. Four trains to Albury instead of three.
3. More express running, due to sweeping railcars and the extra service.
4. Average Albury time reduced from 3 hours 40 minutes to 3 hours.
5. Average Yarrawonga time reduced from 3 hours 35 minutes to 2 hours 40 minutes.
6. Just 10 'running' crew required per day (2 railcar drivers, 4 drivers, and 4 conductor/guards) as all crew would work a 'there and back' shift.
7. Better utilisation of rollingstock, with the third train needed for just two hours at midday, when spare sets are available.
8. The two single line crosses occur at an upgraded Glenrowan.

The capital costs involved with such a timetable are as follows:

1.	One railcar	$2 million
2.	Three passenger locos	$9 million
3.	High speed bogies for three sets	$2 million
4.	Extra superelevation and dekinking	$1 million
5.	Upgrading and remote control of Glenrowan	$1 million
	less	
6.	Three freight locos released	$6 million
	Total capital cost	$9 million

DOWN	Pass A	DRC B	Pass	Pass D	DRC B	Pass A
Spencer Street	07 30	09 55	10 15	12 25	17 20	17 40
Seymour	08 30	10 55	*	13 25	18 20	*
Euroa	08 59	11 26	*	13 54	18 51	*
Benalla	09 25	11 50	12 04	14 19	19 15	19 29
Wangaratta	09 47	-	12 31	14 46	-	19 51
Wodonga	10 26	-	13 06	15 21	-	20 30
Albury	10 35	-	13 15	15 30	-	20 40
Yarrawonga	-	12 35	-	-	20 00	-
UP	Pass A	DRC B	Pass	Pass D	DRC B	Pass A
Yarrawonga	-	06 40	-	-	14 20	-
Albury	06 00	-	11 30	13 45	-	16 30
Wodonga	06 06	-	11 36	13 51	-	16 36
Wangaratta	06 45	-	12 11	14 26	-	17 15
Benalla	07 07	07 25	12 33	14 48	15 05	17 37
Euroa	*	07 51	12 58	*	15 31	18 02
Seymour	*	08 20	13 28	*	16 00	18 32
Spencer Street	09 00	09 20	14 30	16 40	17 00	19 35

Additional stops: A Springhurst, Chiltern
B Avenel, Violet Town, Yarrawonga line

The $9 million price tag for a vastly better North-East service is obviously far better value-for-money than any of STAP's proposals, but even this figure is an inflated estimate of the capital costs involved in faster running. $2 million for a railcar is instead of $1 million for a normal carriage and several generations of buses at $200,000 each, and the passenger locos are available for other work while in Melbourne.

Running costs are much harder to quantify, but there is no doubt that such a service would be far cheaper to operate than the present one. The great advantage to the operator of faster running is better use of crew and equipment, and if this is caused by eliminating restrictions, then fuel and brakes are saved as well. And of course modern bogies and lightweight locos are far kinder to the track at 130 km/h than the present heavyweight freight locos are at 115 km/h.

Using the elasticities given by STAP, this timetable would produce between a 9% (pessimistic) and 24% (optimistic) increase in travel in the North-East. Interestingly, the 24% increase is exactly that given in the 'hundreds of millions of dollars more' version of Scenario 5, costed at around a billion dollars for Victoria. Running costs, far from being nearly double those at present, would be substantially less.

CONCLUSIONS

The STAP findings on the future of Victorian passenger trains are extraordinary. STAP claims, taking Scenario 3 as a starting point, that replacing the present train service with buses (Scenarios 1 and 2) would lead to a 2% drop in traffic. STAP then claims that spending close to $200 million on new trains and lowering the fares (Scenario 4) would also result in a 2% drop in traffic! Scenario 5 simply represents an economic analysis of using the dearest possible sledgehammer to crack a nut, and would seem to have only one purpose — that of preventing logical analysis of much smaller, but carefully targeted investment.

One of STAP's major premises is that buses are as fast as trains — nothing could be further from the truth. The most modern bus takes nearly four and a half hours to reach Albury — a modern railcar could easily beat three hours, and with better track justified by freight traffic, two and half hours. STAP has assumed that V/Line curve speeds, bogie design, loco performance and timetabling skills cannot be improved, and has based its entire argument against faster trains on the high cost of new track.

The example of the North-East service shows that great improvements can be made with an absolute minimum of capital, and that such improvements will often lead to a reduction in operating costs. The most capital-effective way of improving V/Line passenger services is to acquire new passenger locos and railcars, and rebogie the long distance carriage fleet. A higher proportion of railcars, while requiring more capital initially, would lead to even lower operating costs.

STAP's contention that reducing running times by 25% would require a billion dollars over 15 years is complete rubbish. Modern passenger stock in NSW is allowed 125 km/h on 800 m curves — V/Line stock the same age is allowed just 95 km/h. NSW stock is allowed 140 km/h on 47 kg/m rail — V/Line stock is allowed no more than 115 km/h on 60 kg/m rail. Speeds of up to 160 km/h are allowed within the Sydney suburban area on track carrying heavy suburban traffic — speeds greater than 80 km/h are rare in the Melbourne suburban area.

It is obvious that much higher speeds are possible in Victoria without great expense. The simplest proof is to consult some old timetables. Today's *Sunraysia* is allowed 78 minutes for the express run from Ballarat to Maryborough — a decade ago the stopping DRC required just 56 minutes. Today's bus is given 90 minutes from Ararat to Hamilton — the DRC used to make the same journey in 72 minutes. The *Melbourne Express* takes four hours for the Albury - Melbourne journey — in 1982 an XPT reached Albury in just under 2 hours 53 minutes. Smart locos, railcars and bogies coupled with imaginative timetabling could revolutionise V/Line passenger trains, and it is simply absurd to argue against better train services while ignoring these factors. Although already faster than buses, V/Line trains are stuck at their present speed levels not by a lack of capital, but simply because V/Line lacks the willpower to make them go faster.

The up Seymour DRC at Craigieburn on Thurs.3.7.86. (Andrew Kruh)

V/Line Future Directions

At an address given to members and visitors of the Association of Railway Enthusiasts at the association's monthly meeting in Melbourne on the evening of Thursday 30 March 1989, Mr John Hearsch, the Chief General Manager of V/Line's Train Operations Division spoke of recent events and developments within V/Line and outlined some of V/Line's plans and proposed developments for the next few years. The more interesting items mentioned by Mr Hearsch both during his talk and in answering questions from the audience are given below.

V/Line is currently carrying 60% more passengers per year than VicRail-V/Line were carrying per year in 1983, and more passengers per year than VR carried in 1956. There is serious overcrowding on some trains and many complaints are being received from customers and potential customers about inability to book seats on trains. When V/Line was formed in 1983 a target of a 50% increase in passenger figures in five years was set.

Deregulation of road transport has proved to be a problem for V/Line. Mr Hearsch said, 'V/Line still has a long way to go'. The total tonnage carried annually by V/Line has remained virtually constant, but the composition of this tonnage has changed. For example, less grain is being carried but so are more containers. There is much potential for growth of V/Line's freight business.

In 1983 V/Line employed approximately 14,500 staff and productivity was 'abysmal'. In 1989 V/Line employs approximately 10,300 staff and productivity has improved.

Train operations have changed radically. There is no more 'messing about' in yards. Shunting used to cost about $40 million per year. The much reduced amount of shunting now required has also eliminated some industrial problems. Trains are run in blocks or in carefully planned mini-blocks.

In 1983 V/Line inherited over 300 locomotives. In 1989 about 230 are needed on a day to day basis and this number should be able to be reduced further, due to the reduced requirement for shunting locos and the generally higher average speeds at which trains now run. In the period being discussed the number of shunters required per day has gone down from 83 to 30.

In 1980 approximately 22,000 wagons were in use on the state railway system in Victoria. By 1983 this had been reduced to about 10,000, although about 60% of these were still 4-wheelers. In 1989 V/Line has a fleet of about 5000 bogie wagons, of which about 4500 are active. A small number of 4-wheelers is still in use in departmental traffic, but hopefully these will be gone by July of this year and about 60 4-wheelers are still required for briquette traffic from Morwell to the Heinz factory at Dandenong. The 4500 figure is expected to fall further, but Mr Hearsch stressed that new wagons have also been built.

Referring to infrastructure, Mr Hearsch said that yards had become largely redundant and cited the example of Ararat. In 1983 403 railway employees were based at Ararat whereas in 1989 there are 124 and this number will decline even further. A little over 18 months ago every train stopped at Ararat to change crews; now Ararat Loco has been closed.

Many stations have been modernised. V/Line is currently about 75% of the way through a program of refurbishing all of its major stations.

There has been much upgrading of trackwork throughout the state. It is now over 12 months since V/Line had a major mainline derailment caused by a track defect.

There has been extensive rationalisation of communications and safeworking. As recently as three to four years ago communications on the Victorian rail system were still 'something out of the ark'. Train-to-base radio is now in use right across the entire V/Line system, the only Australian government system on which this yet applies.

Two man crewing on freight trains was introduced on V/Line in 1985 and in 1986 V/Line was second only to Westrail in Australia in achieving the figure of 2-man crewing on 100% of all freight trains. In 1989 94% of passenger trains on V/Line run without a guard and hopefully the other 6% will run without a guard by April, which should be a first in Australia.

As V/Line is a small railway system by world standards, all country train control centres have been able to be closed, and consolidated into one central location at Transport House.

About one hundred million dollars has been spent on V/Line's grain transportation system. The central receival points have long sidings and V/Line is well through a program of upgrading all CRP sidings to take G class locos. Standard sized grain trains are run where possible and twin Gs are the standard motive power combination except in the north east where triple headers using X, S, A or N class locos are used because of bridge limitations. The standard Portland grain train is a 4200t train of 55 bogie hoppers and the standard Geelong grain train is a 3100t train of 40 bogie hoppers.

Washing of locos remains a problem. The odd V/Line loco can sometimes be washed by the Met at Jolimont, SRA at Delec or by AN at Mile End. There are plans for a loco washing plant to be included in the proposed renovation and upgrading of locomotive facilities at South Dynon Loco. Some wide bodied locos may be able to be washed at the washing plant to be installed at the new carriage maintenance depot.

The new carriage maintenance depot is almost finished and has cost some $28 million.

Branch line closures were inevitable, but in many areas formerly served by such lines the users of the V/Line service say the new service is better than the old. Mr Hearsch gave the example of the grain growers out along the Meringur line who now use the CRP at Carwarp and V/Line's direct pickup service. Very little of the grain from this area is now going to South Australia. The cost of railing the grain to Geelong in the bogie hoppers is ⅓ that of using GH 4-wheelers. It now costs V/Line $10.5 million per year less to move the grain harvest than it did in 1983.

Mr Hearsch reminded the audience that the Transport Act requires the railways to be profitable. V/Line's cost recovery on its freight operations is currently 65c in the dollar; AN, QR and Westrail are all operating 'in the black' at this stage. The greatest area of opportunity for V/Line is in interstate freight operations. Governments are starting to concede that heavy freight should where possible be on rail; this includes the NSW Liberal and Commonwealth governments.

V/Line is anticipating further growth in passenger traffic, as the present state government has said that in the short term it will not replace whole services on any lines with buses. Only some 10% of all passengers using V/Line services currently pay full fares. Future passenger services would be provided by V/Line under a contract arrangement and the government 'would pick up the tab'. Mr Hearsch also used the term 'creative accounting'. Additional passenger rollingstock has been asked for. Three proposals to provide more passenger rollingstock had been considered recently.

1. The 'Grey Ghost Proposal' has recently been vetoed by the Met as, due to a shortage of cars for suburban traffic, it needs to retain the refurbished Harris cars for its own use. V/Line has since lost interest in taking these cars over from the Met and modifying them for its own use.
2. Conversion of more redundant Harris cars to H sets. This proposal is seen as being less than the best proposal.
3. Begin production of the proposed new R cars for long distance travel. These would be based on the design of the XPT trailer cars and will probably be built to replace the S and Z sets.

V/Line is currently considering acquiring more modern railcars for short and medium distance services, and has called for pre-tenders from a number of Australian and overseas manufacturers. Railcars are desirable from the point of view of operating cost, operating convenience and a high level of utilisation. V/Line would acquire cars of a tried, tested and proven design and a modern maintenance facility would be built. Mr Kennan approves of this proposal. A decision is to be made by August on a contract for probably 24 cars; more could be acquired later. Mr Hearsch expects that all of the cars would be double ended; he stressed that V/Line would not acquire a mixed fleet of single ended and double ended cars of the same design (such as the STA 'Redhens' in Adelaide). The new cars would be capable of running at 115 km/h, would have braking and acceleration capabilities equal to those of the Com Eng electric suburban cars and would be able to be worked in multiples of up to six or possibly eight. The new railcars would be used on runs of up to the length of the run to Ballarat, or possibly a little further. They would have one class seating, and probably no catering facilities.

The DERMs are expected to be out of service by August or September of this year, except for two cars on standby duty. The E cars are becoming something of a worry; one was recently found to have a cracked frame. The K cars are to go as soon as possible; apart from the DERMs they are the only non-airconditioned cars still in use on V/Line. Six 3 car H sets are to be made up to 4 car sets.

The thirty-third G class loco is due to arrive in November 1989. Some stored B and S class units may be required again in future if traffic levels should increase. V/Line management would like to try and avoid the problems it has had with some temporary motive power shortages in the past. The seven G class locos which have yet to arrive should replace at least 14 T and Y class locos. Some interest has been expressed by the managements of some railways in the Third World, particularly in South America and the Middle East, in purchasing surplus V/Line locomotives. V/Line has no short term intention of ordering more locos. More orders may be placed about 1992 or 1993, by which time it is expected that significant advancement will have been made in the development of a.c. traction in diesel electric locomotives. Mr Hearsch pointed out that USA and European diesel locomotive manufacturers seem to be pairing off into partnerships involved in the development of a.c. traction, one of the examples Mr Hearsch mentioned being that between General Electric and Brown-Boveri. Mr Hearsch also mentioned that a joint AN-SRA-V/Line-Westrail deal to have a demonstrator unit brought out to Australia was being looked at.

No construction of large new numbers of wagons is proposed, and the size of the wagon fleet is expected to be stabilised at about 4000 wagons. The AN 5-pack wagon is not suitable for the Adelaide-Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane corridor. A 3-pack prototype is being developed. It will have 45 foot platforms. The four initial 3-packs are being constructed at Ballarat North workshops and the first should be delivered in August 1989. A production fleet of 20 3-packs is proposed.

The South Dynon container terminal is being redeveloped and expanded to five times its current size at a cost of $30 million. It is to become the hub of V/Line's freight operations.

Since November 1988 Train Order working has been introduced on the South Geelong - Warrnambool, Ararat - Portland, Gheringhap - Maroona, North Bendigo - Pinngal and Dunolly - Mildura lines. All Staff and Ticket working in Victoria is to be replaced. The train orders come over the radio. For busier lines, a computer based train order issuing system is being developed. A miniature Fax machine similar to that used in tanks is currently under test in an N class locomotive. A more advanced system is sought to replace Electric Staff working and Double Line Block working. The three traditional safeworking systems just mentioned will hopefully have vanished in three to four years time.

Single manning of locomotives must be introduced. The introduction of Australia's first single manned loco is planned for 4.7.89 on the Brisbane - Rockhampton electrified line. However, it will not be possible to single man all locomotives in Australia.

V/Line is involved with the co-ordination of work on the VFT project. Mr Hearsch said there was about a 50-50 chance that the project would go ahead at this stage. The first stage of a feasibility study of the VFT project is complete. The all up cost of the project would be some $850-900 million, and it would give a nine hour Melbourne - Sydney timing, at an average speed of 105 km/h. Two ways of achieving this timing would be:

1. Upgrade the track and introduce new rollingstock, including high powered locomotives with great acceleration and braking capacity.
2. Use the existing freight stock and continue to run at a maximum speed of 115 km/h, but work on improving track alignments and do some work on easing gradients.

Option 2 would appear to be the better one because option 1 could later be exercised gradually as well. An eight hour freight and passenger service to Sydney would eventually be possible. Mr Hearsch pointed out that $160 million needs to be spent on the Victorian section of the Melbourne - Sydney corridor over the next 10-15 years anyway.

AN has come up with a new Adelaide - Melbourne standard gauge proposal different from that of 2½ years ago. AN are proposing construction of a new Salisbury (SA) - Gawler - Roseworthy - Freeling - Angaston -

Cambrai branch alignment - Monarto South standard gauge line, which would cut 2½ hours off the Adelaide - Melbourne time by avoiding the Adelaide Hills. This proposal has enormous implications for V/Line, whose portion of a standard gauge Adelaide route would go via Maroona, Gheringhap and North Geelong. If the relevant sections of this AN-V/Line route were to be constructed/converted, most of the lines to be retained in western Victoria would have to be standardised as well, particularly Yaapeet, Hopetoun, Portland and Mt Gambier. In such a scenario the North Eastern/Goulburn Valley broad gauge lines would surely be gone in three to four years time. Freight could travel from Sydney to Adelaide 12 hours faster via Melbourne than via Broken Hill if the new standard gauge project were to go ahead.

Subject to the relevant bill being passed by the State parliament the Met and V/Line will be merged into a new Public Transport Commission on 1 July 1989, although the two bodies will continue to operate separately as they do now. A new Amtrak-type structure looks likely to be set up to handle interstate rail traffic in Australia. Such a body would run its own loco fleet, etc.

Electrification could be a future option on the VFT route as traffic volumes grow.

V/Line has no short term plans to lay standard gauge to Webb Dock.

V/Line currently has a 'hit list' of 45 mechanically interlocked signalboxes in Victoria.

Due to maintenance difficulties caused by frequent coupling and uncoupling, push-pull operation of H sets is being considered.

At the conclusion of the time for questions, past ARE president Ted Godwin made the point that although many members of the audience had witnessed most if not all of the changes to which Mr Hearsch referred, it had been easy to lose sight of the vast changes that V/Line has wrought and of the progress it has made, and thanked Mr Hearsch for putting it all into perspective for us.

Portland First Fleet Tour

H A MILTON

We apologise for the delay in bringing you this article. Because of suspected VEDC involvement, publication of information was banned by the Minister for Pastime and Pleasure. We thank the author for recently winning a court case under the Freedom of Information Act to lift the ban.

After its popular reception in Melbourne, the First Fleet Re-enactment flotilla department departed for Portland, where local celebrations had been organised to coincide with the visit. Steamrail responded to a request for a steam special and provided a weekend steam special, the first to be organised under its own auspices. Victorians tend to have forgotten that there were other tours in 1988 apart from Aus Steam; this tour was the most ambitious since the 1987 Adelaide and Mildura tour (*Newsrail,* Nov.88 p.324).

The special departed Spencer Street at 22 00 on Fri.25.3.88, the consist being R761-*Wando-Inman-Coliban-Acheron-Goulburn*-7ABE(kiosk)-1BCE. The run to Ararat was made via North Geelong and Lal Lal, with a delay at Linton Junction where an express goods was crossed. At Ararat A66 (in Bicentennial livery) and a G wagon of coal were added. Departure was 40 minutes late, with A66 leading the R, which was now running tender first. A breakfast and servicing stop was made at Hamilton, but the coaling contractor failed to appear, leaving the R low on fuel for the weekend.

At Portland, D^3 639 and carriages had arrived from Ballarat earlier. The R and the sleeping cars were put on display in the port area near the sailboats. The D^3 and A66 worked push-pull shuttle trips to Gorae. The R returned to Portland station overnight.

On Sunday the R worked a morning tour to Hamilton and returned to the port for display in the afternoon. It also ran an evening tour to Hamilton and return.

On Monday the combined specials set out for Melbourne, with a planned side trip to Dartmoor to be worked by D^3 639. However that locomotive was having problems, so a diesel was used instead. The train arrived in Melbourne that evening.

The smallest boat in the First Fleet Re-enactment, *Tucker Thompson,* from New Zealand. (Roderick B Smith)

General News

Demolition risk to Newport Workshops: The Newport workshops are believed to be under threat of partial demolition. It is believed proposals by the Ministry of Transport to relocate its Jolimont workshops to the Newport site would involve the demolition of at least one wing of the classified 1880s complex. The complex is classified by the National Trust and is expected to be nominated for inclusion in the Historic Buildings Register after the recent preparation of a heritage report recommending inclusion of the site.

The report, prepared for the State Transit Authority and the Historic Buildings Council by Mr Carl Doring, found the workshop complex to be of world significance and with a complex in NSW, one of the biggest and most intact examples of its kind in the world. The original buildings went up during Melbourne's land boom and are seen as an excellent example of industrial architecture of the time. The study also recommends protection of more than 100 items of equipment still on the premises.

The workshops are valuable because of their size and the wide variety of industrial processes and working machinery associated with the site. When they were built they were the largest industrial concern in Victoria.

The study says an 1860s steam hammer and crane are of world heritage significance and mentions other items including a large hydraulic riveting machine and two rope powered 1888 travelling cranes. It describes the Newport workshops as being better than any known surviving 19th century workshops in the US and possibly Great Britain. In the US, a poorer example of a similar complex is being restored and equipped with machinery from elsewhere as part of a major industrial museum.

A spokesman for the Transport Ministry said there had been no decision yet made on the future of the site. He said a decision on whether to move Jolimont workshops to Newport or North Melbourne had to go before Cabinet.

Demolition at Clunes: Clunes residents are angry at the partial demolition of the township's historic railway station. V/Line maintenance workers pulled down the signal box and 50 metres of the bluestone and brick platform. V/Line said parts of the platform were unstable and had to be removed as they were in danger of striking passing trains. The signal box, however, had been removed as a result of confusion and work was stopped when it became obvious it was significant to both the station and Clunes history.

Fares cuts to encourage rail travel: Cheap off-peak fares have been introduced on The Met and V/Line. Passengers will have unlimited off-peak travel on all Met trains, trams and buses after 19 00 on week nights and all day Sundays for $1.20. V/Line will introduce a number of initiatives, including day-return off-peak tickets, first class standby tickets, Saturday family specials, monthly specials, off-peak urban bus tickets and student tickets.

The scheme would be tried for three months from 1 April. If the trial proves to be successful, the scheme will become a permanent feature. The Government decided on the plan after the success of the 60 Plus ticket, introduced in January. This allowed retired persons over 60 years to travel anywhere in Melbourne for $1 per day and since the introduction, 170 000 people had applied for the card.

V/Line return off-peak fares would offer a 50% discount off normal adult return fares from Tuesday to Thursday. The maximum charge for a day return off-peak journey anywhere in Victoria would be $20 for adults and $10 for children, students, concession card holders and 60 Plus card holders.

On off-peak, non-booked services when economy-class was full, first-class standby tickets would allow passengers to move up to first-class for an extra $1 on journeys up to 80 km and $2 for longer trips. For example, a return trip for two adults and two children from Ballarat would drop to $14.10 from $37.14; from Bendigo it would drop from $60.80 to $23.80. Off-peak tickets for $1.20 would be offered to bus patrons in Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley.

Upfield light rail: Further to *Newsrail,* May 1988, p.142. Public transport unions and the Victorian Trades Hall Council attacked proposals for the Upfield rail line. They released a discussion paper which claimed replacement of trains with light rail vehicles would lead to an $8 million loss over 25 years. The paper called for a better train service, which it claimed would lead to a $15 million benefit over the same period.

The paper called for tram services to be retained in Sydney Road. Suggested methods of up-grading the trains included replacing manual level crossing gates with boom barriers. Improvements to the line could cut the Upfield - City journey from 38 minutes to 34. It was claimed the MTA assumption that a light rail journey would take 44 minutes was inaccurate.

The fourth bike special to Swan Hill hauled by N463-N472 approaches Elphinstone tunnel. 10 52, Sat.3.12.88. (Bryce Leydon)

Operations

B and S class sightings: Reported sightings are set out hereunder:

Thurs.23.2. B76 on up Morwell goods. X50-S300 on Melbourne - Adelaide (9117) express goods.

Fri.24.2. C506-S313 on Melbourne - Adelaide (9169) express goods.

Tues.28.2. B65 on Tottenham Yard - Long Island empty steel. S311-T408 on Apex quarry train (9317/9316). S317-S300-T362 on Morwell - North Geelong briquette. The two S class ran elephant style.

Wed.1.3. B65 was the third locomotive in a down wheat preparing to leave Ballarat at 17 15.

Thurs.2.3. B80-B65-T363 departed Ballarat with a distinctive VHCA/VOCX combination on the up at 13 15.

Thurs.9.3. X46-S307 on down Adelaide goods at Deer Park at 21 06.

Thurs.16.3. S307-T403 on up briquette train at Noble Park at 12 40.

Sat.18.3. S306-S311-T390 on Long Island - Tottenham Yard coil steel.

Sun.19.3. S310-2xN sets formed the down Geelong pass. at Spencer Street at 21 30.

Mon.20.3. B75-S311-S317-T405 on Morwell - North Geelong briquette train.

Tues.21.3. T380-S300 on Long Island steel. S317-X44 on Morwell - Tottenham Yard briquette train.

Thurs.23.3. X42-S313 on Albury slab steel. B64 was on a ballast train at Ballan.

Sat.25.3. B64 was in Ballarat depot.

Sun.26.3. B76-N-Z53-BE arrived on up Cobram pass. at Spencer Street at 20 07.

Thurs.30.3. B61 was in the carriage shed yard at Ballarat at 09 30.

C class on the standard gauge: Set out hereunder is an abridged history of the C class working into NSW. C504 arrived in Albury on Fri.5.8.88 for crew training and it returned to Melbourne on Tues.9.8 for repair. On Mon.15.8 No.9693 goods was hauled by 42207-C504. On Wed.16.8 C504 was towed to Junee for crew training. It was expected they would be restricted to trailing unit status because of the lack of a toilet. C505 was transferred to standard gauge on Sun.4.9 and on Wed.7.9 C505-X41-T411 worked No.9689 goods.

The NSW AFULE Cab Committee inspected C504 at Newport workshops on Mon.4.4 then travelled from Tottenham Yard to Ballarat in C503 working 9117 goods with 730t on Wed.13.4. The outcome was a recommendation to restrict the C class to trailing units with an 80 km/h speed limit.

After a period at Junee for crew training, C504 led 8152 from Junee to Cootamundra on a goods on Wed.17.8 for an AFULE ride-quality check. It returned to Junee light engine. On Fri.19.8 it was hauled to Albury in a goods. It ran light engine to Alumatta and replaced an 81 on a goods to Dynon. On Mon.22.8 8172-G518-C504 worked No.9663 goods from Dynon to Albury. On Tues.23.8 C504 was towed in a goods to Junee. On Sun.28.8 C504-4470-4831 ran light engine to Cootamundra, where C504 spent a week. On Sat.3.9 8160-C504 worked a goods from Cootamundra to Goulburn.

C504 finished its period of crew training at Goulburn on Fri.16.9 and was hauled to Sydney by two 48s for crew training at Delec (the locomotive running depot for Sydney). 8174-C504 worked No.3247 goods to Albury on Sun.2.10 and the C class continued to Dynon for repairs.

C505's last broad gauge run was to Long Island with C508 on Thurs.28.7. It was then shopped at Newport Workshops. It was outshopped on Thurs.1.9. Its first standard gauge run was to Albury with 8180 on Mon.5.9, returning on Tues.6.9. C505-X41-T411 worked No.9689 goods from Somerton to Albury on Wed.7.9. C505 returned to Melbourne on Fri.9.9 and continued to work between Melbourne and Albury. Its first run into NSW was on Sat.17.9; C505-8150-4835 worked No.3312 goods from Albury to Junee. The C class was then used for crew training at Junee. On Wed.21.9 4821-4463-C505 departed Junee northwards with a short goods, detaching the 48 at Goulburn. C505 continued to Sydney, where it remained until Fri.7.10, departing with No.3393 goods from Cooks River to Dynon. While in Sydney it was washed.

Regular working of the C class commenced on Fri.14.10. C504-G521 led No.3196 express goods into Sydney; C504 returned that night with No.3393 goods from Cooks River. Also on 14.10 8162-C505 worked No.3228 northbound goods; C505 returned south next day. Because NSW is not keen on the C class, most working is south of Albury. They were seen in NSW on 28.10 and 4.11 and their use became more common in NSW through Nov.88. On Fri.4.11 C504 was trailing unit on 3194 superfreighter, returning as trailing unit on 3151 Cooks River - Albury express goods. It was added to this train at Enfield. A G-C combination occurred on Tues.8.11: G517-C504 worked No.3180 goods. The first working of double Cs in NSW occurred on Tues.22.11: C505-C504 (both with cab leading) worked No.3226 ingots goods to Cooks River terminal in Sydney. On Wed.23.11 they returned south leading 8179 on 3213 goods. On Thurs.1.12 bicentennial 42218 led C505 on No.3194 freight.

C classes made sporadic appearances in December, including a paired working on No.3393 goods on Thurs.22.12. On Wed.4.1 C505-C504, back-to-back, worked 3228 Albury - Homebush goods. The pair returned south next day towing dead G523 on No.3341 goods.

Melbourne - Brisbane services: The continuing failure of Australia's railway authorities to provide a Melbourne - Brisbane service is reflected in the number of buses running between the two cities — over 70 each week. SRANSW has recently slowed the *Brisbane Limited* further. After all of the money spent on Newcastle electrification, modern diesels and CTC, the train is now slower than it was in 1957. A Melbourne - Cairns service is even worse. QR's new timetable, to be implemented with Brisbane - Rockhampton electrification from 5.7.89, again fails to make any connections to or from the south.

Locomotive fuel conservation: A fuel saver switch, costing $3500 can now be fitted to locomotives enabling the driver to have more control over the power at his disposal. The unit is about the size of a clock radio and has a series of buttons numbered from one to six. The driver can operate these buttons in order to switch engines on or off. It is estimated the cost of the switch can be recovered in fuel savings made on two return trips to Adelaide.

In normal circumstances all the engine power is available all the time. The fuel saver switch allows the driver to set other locomotives in the consist to idle whilst he powers the train from the lead locomotive on long flat track. All of the broad gauge C class and some of the G class have been fitted with the units.

Mr Gerald Dee, V/Line's first Fuel Conservation Officer achieved a saving of $800 000 in his first year and as costs have escalated it has become obvious that fuel was an area where considerable savings could be made.

Flaw truck: A new $600 000 flaw detection vehicle has been acquired by V/Line. It will replace contract track testing which has cost between $80 and $100 a kilometre, a total of almost $200 000 per year. It is anticipated the new unit will pay for itself in less than one year because of the savings made from manpower and maintenance as well as income from testing Met and AN lines.

The unit was purchased from a Perth based heavy haul railroad technology firm, RTI Limited, and has been modified to suit V/Line operations.

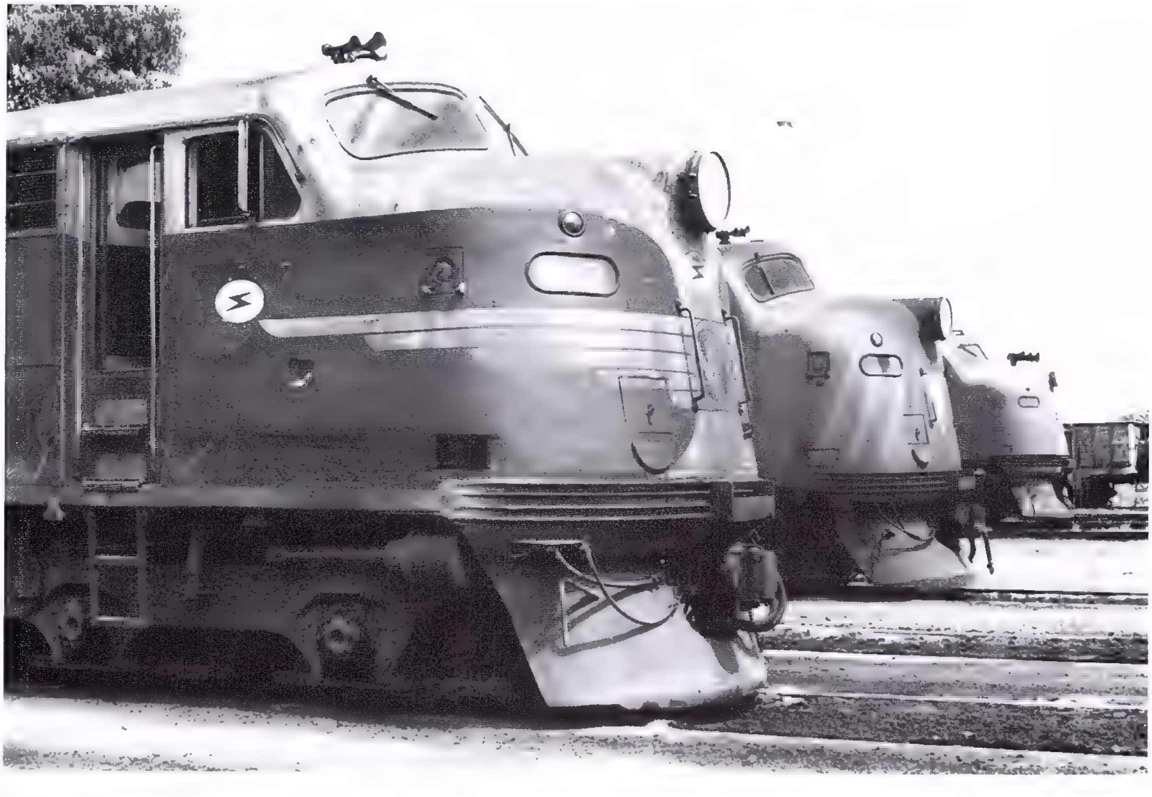
Locomotive policy change: In 1988, V/Line implemented a policy of withdrawing equivalent power for each G class delivery by removing mainline locomotives, mainly B and S class. It was on this basis which *Newsrail* requested individual sightings as it was expected that the numbers would be reduced monthly and ultimately they would disappear from the scene. The response has been excellent but because of major track upgrading, including the opening of the new bridge at Echuca and likely approval for N class locomotives to work to Bairnsdale, V/Line's priority is now to eliminate more T and Y class. If a mainline unit suffers a major failure it will not be repaired but will be replaced by another mothballed unit. Whilst we continue to request B and S class sightings it would seem the remaining locomotives still in blue and gold may be more at risk so it is requested sightings of B65, B75, S302, S306, S311, T358, T359, Y107, Y140, Y164, be forwarded. Of equal importance, sightings of 55RM, 56RM, 61RM and 64RM are also requested.

SOUTH WEST

Lara sightings: On Tues.28.3 the following trains were sighted at Lara between 08 50 and 16 35:

08 52 P20 on the 08 00 (8219) down South Geelong pass.
09 18 T407-T385 on the 09 00 (9243) down Fyansford empty cement train.
09 21 A71 on the 06 50 (8236) up Warrnambool pass.
09 38 A62 on the 08 30 (8107) down Mildura pass.
09 44 N459-N45? on the 08 55 (8221) down Warrnambool pass.
09 55 X31 on the 09 05 (8225) down South Geelong pass.
10 00 P20 on the 09 35 (8238) up South Geelong pass.
10 43 A60 on the 10 00 (8227) down Geelong pass.
10 49 X31 on the 10 30 (8240) up South Geelong pass.
11 48 A60 on the 11 30 (8242) up Geelong pass.

S302, S312 and GM18 at Mile End Diesel Depot, South Australia. Sun.5.3.89. (Wayne Morris)



11 52 N474 on the 11 00 (8229) down Geelong pass.
11 53 B75-T370 on the 11 35 (9246) up Geelong goods.
12 25 G535-G515-G530 on the 11 00 (9167) down Adelaide steel train.
12 43 N456 on the 12 00 (8231) down Geelong pass.
12 48 N474 on the 12 30 (8244) up Geelong pass.
13 19 N467-A79 on the 12 40 (8235) down Warrnambool pass.
13 48 N456 on the 13 30 (8246) up Geelong pass.
13 49 A60 on the 13 00 (8237) down Geelong pass.
14 01 S307 on the 09 00 (9240) down Geelong briquette train ex Morwell.
14 43 A60 on the 14 30 (8248) up Geelong pass.
14 43 X42-T352-T373-T398-H3 on the 12 10 (9249) down Geelong goods.
14 48 A78 on the 14 00 (8239) down South Geelong pass.
14 58 N451-N459 on the 12 30 (8256) up Warrnambool pass.
15 13 C510-BL32-C503 on the 13 05 (9169) down Adelaide express goods.
15 27 A85 on the 14 40 (8241) down South Geelong pass.
15 54 T392 on down Geelong empty grain train.
15 56 A78 on the 15 35 (8258) up South Geelong pass.
16 10 N471 on the 15 20 (8243) down South Geelong pass.
16 33 A85 on the 16 10 (8260) up South Geelong pass.

Failure on Warrnambool pass.: On Labour Day Mon.13.3 the 12 40 (8235) down Warrnambool pass. departed Spencer Street on time with A71-Z51-D323. At km post 265 between Terang and Warrnambool the A class failed. Two buses came from Warrnambool to take on the passengers while the crew from A71 were picked up by car and taken to Warrnambool where X40 was stabled in the yard. The crew took X40 to recover the train and haul it into Warrnambool. The train was still there at 17 40 while the driver was receiving a train order from Control.

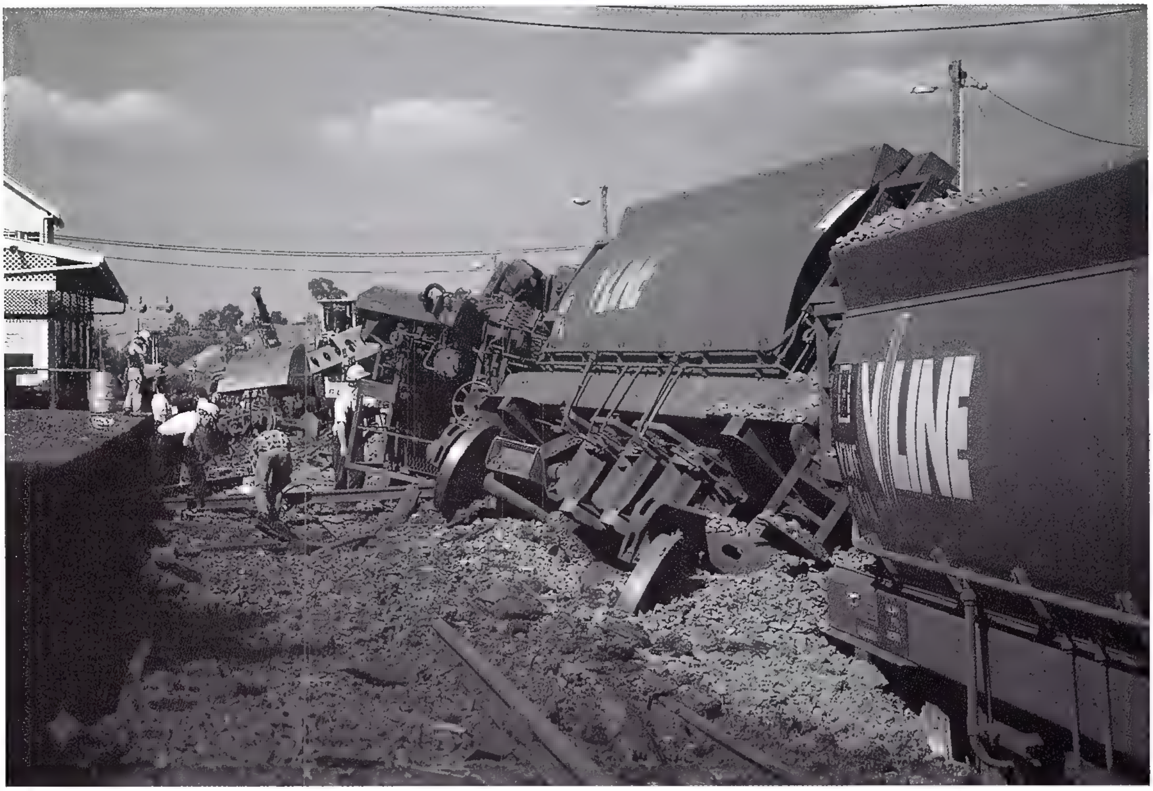
WEST

Bacchus Marsh derailment: On Thurs.30.3 an up ballast train, worked by B61, derailed at Bacchus Marsh in the late morning after allegedly having braking difficulty descending Ingliston bank. The derailment caused severe damage to points and tracks in Bacchus Marsh yard and blocked all through movements. Trains for Ballarat and beyond were diverted via Lal Lal. Bacchus Marsh trains terminated at Melton, with connecting buses. B61 had a damaged braking system but was fairly intact. A light engine was sent to collect it and the leading two wagons, making a slow journey to Melbourne (refuged at Deer Park to be overtaken by the 16 55 up Bacchus Marsh, 17 10 ex Melton). A brakevan on the ballast train was buried one metre into the ground.

Stawell observations: Observations during March as follows:

Tues.7.3. 967-704-C508 up express goods (31=91) at 07 56.
Wed.8.3. S300-H5-H1 down goods (19=43) at 18 25.
Mon.13.3. X31-N464-N9-N10 up pass. (7) at 15 17 (first series X class are rare at Stawell).
Fri.24.3. N457-N459-A85-N9-N12 up pass. (7) at 08 15. X39-N461-N13-N19 down pass. (7) at 11 40.

The scene at Bacchus Marsh shortly after the derailment on Thurs.30.3.89. (Graham Crichton)



Sat.25.3. N457-N459 down pass. (6) at 11 13.

Mon.27.3. N454-N464 down pass. (6) at 11 41. N457-X51 down pass. (7) at 11 35.

Tues.28.3. 704-706-939-938 up express goods (46=127) at 08 32. X43-A7?-N11-N10 up pass. (7) at 14 50.

Wed.29.3. C507-G534-S313 down express goods (50=136) at 19 15.

Longer goods trains: Further to *Newsrail,* April, there are two long trains per day: 10 25 Mon.-Sat. (9169) Dynon - Adelaide and 1930 Sun.-Fri. (9170) Adelaide - Melbourne. The two are routed via Cressy, which allows a maximum load of 4500t (69t per wagon, virtually a full load in each). If routed via Lal Lal, the load is reduced to 3800t (58t per wagon); if routed via Ballan, the load is reduced to 3100t (47t per wagon, implying empty wagons). In all cases, empty wagons and wagons loaded below 28t gross must be marshalled in the rear 2600t of the train.

Stawell Gift: Traffic this year was heavy. On Mon.27.3 the 12 30 down Ballarat pass. had three N sets with two continuing empty to Stawell to form an up special.

General sightings:

Fri.17.3. 704-C509-X51 Melbourne - Adelaide express goods on the Tottenham flyover (9169) at 13 46.

Sat.18.3. G515-703 Adelaide - Melbourne superfreighter (9186) at Tottenham Yard at 07 40. G512-G529-X52-C503 (dead) Adelaide - Melbourne express goods (9170) passed West Footscray at 08 00 closely followed by BL26-702 Adelaide - Melbourne express goods (9152) at 08 12.

Tues.21.3. BL26-702 Adelaide - Melbourne superfreighter (9186) at West Footscray at 10 55. BL35-X52 Adelaide - Melbourne express goods (9152) passed Sunshine at 11 12. C508-703 Melbourne - Adelaide express goods (9169) departed Tottenham Yard at 13 15. BL32-S301-X47 on an extremely late running Adelaide - Melbourne express goods (9170) at 14 06.

Thurs.23.3. C508-C506 (elephant style)* on Melbourne - Adelaide (9117) express goods passed Middle Footscray at 12 07. G534-X51-703 on Melbourne - Adelaide express goods (9169) in Tottenham yard at 12 32.
*Nose to tail.

Mt. Gambier goods: On Sat.18.3 the up Mt. Gambier goods (9242) was hauled by X54-S300-X48-939-947. This train was observed approaching West Footscray at 08 35. It is believed that the first three locomotives were attached at Geelong.

Overland: Loco combinations have shown considerable variation. All have been either N-N or N-X and the following list is shown with the leading engine first:
N456-N473, N454-N475, N467-N453, N459-N451,
X49-N459, X46-N472, N471-N465, N471-N464,
N464-X49 N471-X53, N469-N460, N475-X45,
N475-X52.

On several occasions a green and gold AN motorail wagon has formed part of the consist. The down train on Wed.22.3 was 19 vehicles, i.e. N469-N460-AMBP-AMBP-PCO1-*Kuldalai-Mururi-Malkari-Tantini*-Club No. 2-*Dorai-Juki-Yankai*-AJ3-AJ1-BJ6-RBJ3-BJ4-RBJ2-CO2.

NORTH

Swan Hill report: Locomotives used on Swan Hill goods services during March were:
Thurs.2.3. T373; Tues.7.3. T351; Thurs.9.3. B80; Thurs.16.3. S313; Tues.21.3. X49; Thurs.23.3. S307; Tues.30.3. X41-T373.

Echuca notes: Sightings for March set out hereunder:

Fri.3.3. X-21xVHGF departed on down at 07 00. T410-2xKMQ-VLCX-7xcontainers departed on down at 09 00. X39-20xKMQ-20xVHGF arrived on up at 13 04.

Mon.6.3. X-18xVHHF departed on down goods at 07 00.

Tues.7.3. X41-VPCX-2xVTQY-12xcontainers arrived on up goods at 16 20.

Wed.8.3. X-T arrived with down goods at 06 43. X departed light engine on the down at 07 00. T386-5xVOWA-KMQ-VLCX-10xcontainers departed on down at 08 55. X31-20xVHGF arrived on up at 12 11.

Thurs.9.3. X42-VLCX departed on down at 09 00. X42-VLCX-2xcontainers arrived on up at 12 10.

Fri.10.3. X43-9xKMQ-VPCX-2xVTQY-2xAO??-VOBX-3xVOCX(all empties from Tongala Nestle's fuel supply system)-30xcontainers assembled as an up goods at 16 50.

Wed.15.3. X44-T351-8xVHGF-4xVPCX-20xcontainers formed the evening up goods at 16 00 and departed at 16 30.

Thurs.16.3. X42-VLCX-27xcontainers departed on down goods at 09 05. 52RT in yard. X42-VLCX-9xKMQ-18xcontainers arrived on up goods at 13 20.

Fri.17.3. T363-VLCX-5xVHGF-20xcontainers departed on down goods at 09 08. X36-T363-7xVOCX/AO?X(empties from Tongala briquette traffic)-45xcontainers assembled in yard as up goods at 16 00. G527-VHCFs arrived at 15 35 in preparation for new bridge opening.

Sun.19.3. New bridge over Murray River officially opened. G527 first official goods to cross. Returned light engine at 16 53.

Mon.20.3. X38-VLCX-8xcontainers departed on down at 08 45. X38-VLCX-33xcontainers arrived on up at 12 30.

Tues.21.3. X40-VLCX-18xcontainers departed on down at 09 00. X40-T386-2xVPCX-22xcontainers in yard as up goods at 16 45.

Wed.22.3. X42-VLCX-6xcontainers departed on down at 09 03.

Wed.29.3. X34-VLCX-11xcontainers departed on down at 11 47. X34-T343 in yard with up goods at 16 25.

Thurs.30.3. X38-2xcontainers-VLCX departed on down at 09 00. X38-2xVHGF-2xVPCX-25xcontainers in yard as up goods at 16 30.

Echuca special pass.: On Sun.19.3, for the official opening ceremony of the new bridge over the Murray River, a special pass. for invited guests departed Spencer Street at 07 55, travelling via Bendigo. The train consisted of 2xN*(City of Echuca & City of Mildura)*-BJ10-Club No.3-BJ8-AJ3-*Norman.* This was the first time that *Overland* carriages had been powered by a locomotive instead of a powervan. The guests went by bus to watch G527 haul hopper wagons over the bridge. The special did not cross. *Norman* was turned at Echuca and the special returned via Bendigo, arriving at Spencer Street at 19 30.

Bendigo observations: Recent sightings are set out hereunder:

Sun.19.2. Bendigo Loco: N475, T386, 395, 406, X39, 44, Y161, 163, J541. 16 10 down Bendigo pass.: P19-SH27.

Mon.20.2. X39-5xVZXA-6xVZMF on down ballast at Bendigo North at 09 26. Y163-VTQY-VTQF(Ampol) departed for California Gully at 10 46 and returned light engine at 11 02.

Tues.21.2. Y163 light engine to Eaglehawk at 09 50. Down ballast plough and tampers at 10 09. Down Korong Vale goods consisted of T379-2xVOFX-WQCX-VQLX-NQOX-2xVQCX-NQOX-4xVQCX. Up pilot Y163-VZTX at 11 00. P20-20xKMQ-VZCA on up sleeper discharge train arrived at 18 26. S312-T367-5xVHWA-3xD vans-VLCX-VLDX-VLCX-VFTF-3xVZTX- VLCX-VFFX-VTQY-VTQX-VTQY-VTQZ-2xVTQY-2xVTQZ-VTQF-VTQY-VTQF- 3xVTQY-2xVTQZ-VFLX arrived on up Swan Hill goods at 19 32. Down Swan Hill pass., X53-2xD-Z52-D arrived at 19 45.

Thurs.23.2. Y163-VZFA-3xVTQX-VFMX-VOCX-VZLA(workshops)-VTQY-VTQF(Ampol)-2x VZTX(Eaglehawk)-2xVTQY-3xVTQF(Caltex) arrived at Bendigo North at 08 52. After shunting Caltex and workshops off, departed for California Gully and Eaglehawk at 09 38, returning light engine at 10 26. Up Swan Hill goods, S306(VR)-2xD-2xVLEX-7xVTQY-2xVHGF arrived at 18 10. Up Korong Vale goods, T376-2xAOGF-14xKMQ-VZCA arrived at 18 52. Up Echuca goods, X38-T390-13xKMQ-1xG-4xVZSX-2xVPCX-2xVTQY-2xVTQZ-VQCX-9xAQMX-WQCX-VQCX-NQEX-2xVQCX-AQCX-AQQX arrived at 20 12. S306-T358(both VR) departed at 22 28 on Tottenham Yard goods.

Sun.26.2. Bendigo loco: N457, T370, 380, 385, X43, Y161, 163, J541.

Tues.28.2. Whilst shunting at the Caltex siding, the track was damaged with only VTQZ-VTQF being placed for unloading leaving 2xVTQZ-3xVTQY short of the unloading point. The track was re-opened at 14 30. Y161 then placed 3xVTQY for unloading then left with 2xVTQZ at 14 53 for Ampol at California Gully, Caltex having arranged to unload the two tankers at the Ampol depot as they can unload only three at a time. Down Korong Vale goods, T385-VQCX arrived at 14 09. S306 at fuel point.

Thurs.2.3. Y163-VTQY-VTQF(Ampol) departed at 09 11 and returned light engine at 09 31. Down Korong Vale goods, T399-T367-VOFX-2xAOGF-2xVOFX-3xVQCX-20xVHGF arrived at Bendigo North at 10 13. Up Korong Vale goods, T367-T399-VFTF-AQMX-8xVQCX-VQLX-VQCX arrived Bendigo yard at 17 00. N458, S306 stabled at Bendigo Loco.

Sun.5.3. Bendigo Loco: N457, 469, T388, X38, 41, Y161, 163, J541.

Tues.7.2. Down Korong Vale goods, T391-11xVQCX-VQLX-VQCX-VOFX arrived at Bendigo North at 15 50. S317-S313(tail-tail) stabled at Loco.

Thurs.9.3. At 10 10, Y163 was pulling a rake of 40 stored wagons off the old Heathcote line and then setting back into the Workshops arrival siding when a bogie under one of the two VTHX gas tankers jumped a set of points and ran in the dirt for 20 metres before it was brought to a halt. All this was fouling the Echuca line

J515 steams back into Victoria on a shuttle trip between Tocumwal and Strathmerton on Sat.25.3.89. (G Payne)

and the Nolan Street gates. The track was repaired and cleared by 14 00. S317-S313 arrived on a down Swan Hill grain at 14 37. X41-4xVQCX was at Bendigo North on a down Korong Vale goods at 14 50.

Sun.12.3. Bendigo Loco: A71, B61, G513, S313, S317, T404, X42, Y161, 163, J541.

Thurs.16.3. Y163-VQTY-VTQF(Ampol) departed Bendigo North at 09 10. Y163 returned light engine at 09 27. Y134 replaced Y142 as workshop pilot.

Fri.17.3. X31-T367-40xVHGF on down block grain at Bendigo North at 09 30. T367-X31-40xVHGF on up block grain at 12 17.

Sun.18.3. Bendigo Loco: N470, T368, X31, 38, Y161, 163, J541.

NORTH EAST

Unusual Seymour pass.: On Tues.28.3 the 05 45 (8302) up Seymour pass. consisted of T391-CP291-MTH102-MTH101-*Goulburn-Loddon*. The train was sighted at Spencer Street at 07 35.

Seymour Loco Steam Preservation Group tour: On Sat.25.3. and Sun.26.3 the group ran a train consisting of J515-29BCPL-43BCPL-5ABE-14BE-3BCE- *Loddon-Goulburn*-58RM from Seymour to Numurkah where J515 was turned to run tender first to Tocumwal. *Goulburn* and *Loddon* were detached as was 58RM. J515 took the remainder of the consist on shuttle trips between Tocumwal and Strathmerton whilst 58RM continued to a point north of Tocumwal station west of the Jerilderie line to the old ICI explosives factory siding where there is a platform with the broad gauge on one side and standard gauge on the other.

58RM ran this particular trip because the Tocumwal Heritage Centre is nearby and people were taken from the siding to the centre by bullock wagon.

Special trains: Two broad gauge special trains of note ran through Mangalore during April.
Thurs.16.3. 11 00, A62-*Norman*-2xD on down Euroa pass. 12 31, the same consist returned on the up.
Sat.25.3. 09 10, J515 on down special pass. to Tocumwal. Sun.26.3. 17 30, J515 returned on the up. The consist is listed in the above item.

Kyabram goods: Traffic at Kyabram is very light. Sightings of the goods from Toolamba are set out hereunder:

Thurs.2.3. T(3rd series)-8xVOFX.

Tues.7.3. T(3rd series)-6xVOFX.

Thurs.9.3. Y-4xVOFX. The first visit of a Y class in about eight weeks.

Mon.20.3. Y-4xVOFX(full) arrived and Y-6x VOFX(empty) departed.

Tues.28.3. Y152-9xVOFX.

Mangalore observations: Observations during Easter listed hereunder:

Thurs.23.3. N474-X47 on down Albury pass. at 21 20.

Fri.24.3. N456-N474 on up empty cars at 03 45. N472-B76 on down Cobram pass. at 10 30. X54-X48 on down Albury pass. at 11 50. X48-X54 on up Albury pass. at 18 29.

Sat.25.3. A60-X49 on up Albury pass. at 08 44. N454-X39 on down Albury pass. at 09 36. N454-X39 on up Albury pass. at 18 30.

Sun.26.3. X34-X40 on down Albury pass. at 11 20.

Mon.27.3. N462-N467 on down Albury pass. at 09 30. S302-S317 on down Albury pass. at 13 35. N466-H set on down Cobram pass. at 14 13.

Tues.28.3. N454-N464 on down Albury pass. at 09 32. N457-Z60(normally N set) on down Cobram pass. at 10 48. X51-A71 on down Albury pass. at 13 33.

Other observations during March are recorded as follows:

Fri.3.3. X33-X42-S302-T383 on up Wodonga goods (9304) at 00 33. S301-S300 on down Wodonga goods (9300) at 07 16. X34 on down Cobram pass. (8307) at 10 52.

Sat.4.3. T358 down Albury empty steel (9345) at 00 09.

Mon.6.3. S310-S300 down Wodonga goods (9300) at 07 00. S307-T376-T357-T412 up Wodonga goods at 21 46.

Tues.7.3. T370 up Wodonga, down Shepparton ballast at 10 55. B80-T394 up Wodonga oil (9224) at 20 02.

Thurs.9.3. N457-X53 up Albury pass. (8318) at 14 50.

Fri.10.3. X38-T392-T372-T399 up Wodonga goods (9304) at 01 10. X44-A78 up Albury pass. (8318) at 14 35. T386-T387-T369-Y165 up Shepparton goods (9332) at 19 21. N456-X48 down Albury pass. (8331) at 21 10.

Sun.12.3. N456-X48 up Albury pass. (8336) at 19 13.

Mon.13.3. N458-A79 up Albury pass. (8334) at 18 41.

Fri.17.3. T360-T395-Y148 up Shepparton goods (9332) at 18 51.

Thurs.23.3. B65-T390 down Albury empty steel (9345) at 00 59. T395-T391-T392-T351 up Wodonga oil (9224) at 20 16. S317-S302-B65 up Wodonga goods (9304) at 23 29.

Fri.24.3. T386-T402-T372-Y152 down Shepparton goods (9365) at 02 25.

Tues.28.3. S306-S313 down Wodonga goods (9300) at 07 15. S313-T363-T364-T398 up Wodonga goods (9304) at 21 26.

Wed.29.3. N451-X44 down Albury pass. (8305) at 09 30. X31-X51 down Cobram pass. (8307) at 10 36. N451-X44 up Albury pass. (8318) at 14 52. X51-X31 up Cobram pass. at 15 41.

Fri.31.3. T377-T396-T372 down Shepparton oil (9380) at 04 25.

DRC failure: On Mon.13.3, DRC40 ran the 07 45 (8011) down Kyneton pass. While returning from Kyneton the DRC failed and was seen being hauled empty through Middle Footscray at 13 09 behind N462-N474 which were sent light from Spencer Street at 11 40 to rescue the DRC.

Bendigo pass.: On Mon.6.3, the 18 30 (8065) down Bendigo pass. was hauled by X42-X46-A60. On Tues.7.3, the train was hauled by S317-S313-N467 and on Tues.14.3, the train was hauled by N456-S313.

STANDARD GAUGE

Relief expresses. On Mon 30.1. there was a relief *Melbourne Express* departing Sydney. The 21 35 relief *Sydney Express* on that day was G517-VHN-VFK-VFS-VFK-VRS-VFX-VBK-PHS.

Intercapital Daylight pamphlet: By mid-February, the practice of distributing a pamphlet describing lineside towns had been introduced on this train.

Special carriage: On Sat.25.2. the northbound *Intercapital Daylight* included SRANSW special carriage

AAH9 for a visiting American film star travelling from Adelaide - Sydney who has a dislike of flying. The film star, Whoopi Goldberg, joined the train at Sunshine after travelling from Adelaide in No.5 State Car attached to the *Overland*.

Observations at Mangalore: Sightings during February are listed hereunder:

Wed.1.2. X37-T411 down goods at 13 05.
Thurs.2.2. X37 up goods at 08 20. 8169-X37 down goods at 15 45.
Fri.3.2. X37 up goods at 02 38. 8171-8167 *Melbourne Express* at 09 32. (Normally hauled by single 81 or G class).
Sat.4.2. C504 up goods at 00 46. C505 down goods at 15 43.
Sun.5.2. 8180-G522 *Sydney Express* at 21 30.
Mon.6.2. G519 Ford car train at 18 56. (Usually hauled by X37)
Tues.7.2. C504 down goods at 14 02.
Wed.8.2. X37 up goods at 04 49.
Thurs.9.2. C505 up goods at 03 59. X37 up goods at 04 53. C504 up goods at 12 23.
Sat.11.2. C505 up goods at 08 10. G520-C505 down goods at 19 15.
Sun.12.2. 8178-8168 *Sydney Express* at 21 31.
Mon.13.2. 8175-G516 *Sydney Express* at 21 28.
Tues.14.2. X37 up goods at 05 27. C505 down goods at 12 46.
Thurs.16.2. G522-T411 down goods at 00 15. C505 down goods at 12 45.
Fri.17.2. C504 down goods at 01 30. X37 up goods at 04 25. 8170 down *Intercapital Daylight* at 10 17. (Normally 422 class).
Sat.18.2. C504-42206 down goods at 01 40.
Mon.20.2. C505 down goods at 12 15. G519 Ford car train at 18 57.
Tues.21.2. C504 down goods at 13 00. 8167-X37 down goods at 15 55.
Wed.22.2. C505 up goods at 04 57. C505 down goods at 13 36.
Thurs.23.2. C505 up goods at 00 18. C504 up goods at 06 55. G522-8176 *Sydney Express at* 21 42.
Fri.24.2. X37 up goods at 04 10.
Sat.25.2. 8175-42216 down goods at 19 04. G521-G518 *Sydney Express at* 21 32.
Sun.26.2. 8177-8173 *Sydney Express* at 21 41.

Mangalore observations, March: The two C class and the single X class locomotives still dominate the unusual locomotive workings; however, there have been some instances of other unusual workings. These are listed below:

Fri.3.3. 42202 down goods at 02 06.
Sun.5.3. 8179-8172 *Sydney Express* at 21 27.
Tues.7.3. G515-42209 down goods at 23 58.
Fri.10.3. 42205 up goods at 07 18. 42204 down goods at 21. 11.
Sun.12.3. X37 *Melbourne Express* at 07 39. C504-8177-G520 up goods at 11 30.
Tues.21.3. 42201 down goods at 22 15.
Thurs.23.3. 42207 up goods at 02 20. 42207-42202 down *Intercapital Daylight* at 10 30.
Tues.28.3. 8179-G522-G519 up goods at 17 56.

Other sightings:

* Thurs.23.2 (9695) down express goods was hauled by C504-C505-X37. The (9693) goods to Goulburn was cancelled and believed to be connected to the rear of 9695. The train was long but the locomotives handled it with ease as they passed through Sunshine at 13 34.

The State Rail Authority of NSW special car AAH9 was part of the *Intercapital Daylight* consist on Sat.25.2.89, for the use of Whoopi Goldberg (see text). (Stephen Molloy)

- Thurs.21.3 the (9662) up express goods was seen at West Footscray with 42201 at the head at 13 10.

Intercapital Daylight's fast run: The *Intercapital Daylight* from Sydney on Fri.31.3, hauled by 8163, suffered problems en route from Sydney to Albury. It departed Henty 41 late at 16 31 and arrived at Albury at 17 14. 8163 was replaced by 42202 and departure time for Melbourne was 17 22. The times for each loop are listed below:

	Schedule	Actual	Minutes Late
Albury depart	16 48	17 22	34
Wodonga Loop	16 58	17 30 15	32
Chiltern Loop	17 15	17 45 10	30
Alumatta Loop	17 35	18 05 35	30
Glenrowan Loop	17 44	18 13 59	29
Benalla Loop	17 58	18 26 11	28
Violet Town Loop	18 12	18 39 16	27
Longwood Loop	18 30	18 55 22	25
Seymour Loop	18 50	19 15 14	25
Tallarook Loop	18 58	19 23 14	25
Broadford Loop	19 08	19 32 24	24
Wallan Loop	19 27	19 49 46	22
Donnybrook Loop	19 35	19 56 34	21
Somerton Loop	19 43	20 02 25	19
Tullamarine Loop	19 50	20 08 28	18
McIntyre Loop	19 54	20 11 00	17
Sunshine Loop	19 58	20 15 10	17
West Footscray Junction	20 02	20 18 29	16
South Dynon Junction	20 08	20 20 56	12
Spencer Street arrive	20 20	20 25 19	5

The total time for the journey was 3 hours 3 minutes and the average speed between Wodonga and West Footscray was 108 km/h.

This schedule confirms the theory put forward in the article 'A Better Melbourne - Sydney Service', *Newsrail,* September 1988. It also confirms the fact that the 422 class is indeed a fine locomotive.

EAST

Warragul Notes: Observations and notes are set out hereunder:

- On Wed.1.3 the 20 27 (8437) down Traralgon pass. arrived at Warragul at 23 17 (1 hour 14 mins. late). On Tues.7.3. it arrived at 22 40.
- On Thurs.2.3 the 06 50 (8410) up Traralgon pass. arrived at Warragul 11 mins. late and stopped at the end of double track at Longwarry from 08 00 to 08 05 before proceeding onto the single line and stopping at the platform. It crossed the 06 36 (4015) down Warragul pass. at the up end of Bunyip (end of single line) due to continued failures of the Bunyip - Longwarry signalling and points system. It caught up to a suburban train by Hallam and was delayed with repeated stops and slow running until reaching Caulfield at 09 20. Flinders Street arrival was at 09 36 (due 09 09). The 13 54 (4067) down Warragul pass. was terminated at Pakenham and passengers were directed to a bus which arrived about 10 mins. after the train. The train was reversed across the level crossing at the up end of Pakenham, with the guard blowing the whistle for the level crossing, and then driven forward to be refuged in the yard. The bus duly arrived at Warragul at 15 50 (train due at 15 24). This was because the points and signals were still out.
- Several instances of N sets scraping Yarraman platform when travelling in the up direction have occurred, viz. No.8410 on Thurs.2.3, No.8406 on Thurs.9.3. and No.8410 on Wed.22.3. In each case the BRN car scraped the platform where trackwork is in progress.
- On Thurs.9.3 the 16 27 (4069) down Warragul was not delayed at Pakenham by clearing all passengers to the front 3 cars. Only passengers for Longwarry were asked to move. Six car suburbans have been close to time at Warragul since then, so presumably passenger objections to being moved have succeeded.
- On Fri.10.3 the 05 55 (4008) up Warragul pass. left at 06 05. The 06 05 (8412) up Bairnsdale left Warragul at 09 11 (due 08 36). Warragul station staff provided no explanation for this late running other than to state that there was nothing wrong, they were just late. The lateness of the suburban train suggests non-arrival of one of the crew.
- On Wed.22.3 the 17 00 (8438) up Sale left Warragul at 19 19 (scheduled 18 35). Later that evening newspapers in the Warragul scouts paper shed were found to be burning fiercely in a shed in the Warragul station grounds. Warragul Fire Brigade, Police, Station Master and Transit Patrol Officer all attended the outbreak.
- By early 1989 a baulk had again been placed across the former No.3 road at Warragul. This time it is at the down side of the path crossing the tracks for front-end loader use between the goods shed/parcels office and the up platform. The rest of the truncated track, on the up side of the baulk, still remains.

H class to Lyndhurst: On Fri.31.3 the 17 00 (9490) block cement train from Waurn Ponds to Lyndhurst was sighted passing through Flinders Street at 21 34 with H3-T385-12xVPCX.

Multi-unit Bairnsdale pass.: On Mon.13.3 the 18 05 (8431) down Bairnsdale pass. departed Spencer Street at 18 25 with N473-X47-B64-N467-N470-D330-N16-N2. All five locomotives were powering.

METROPOLITAN

Footscray diversions: From Tues.28.3 to Fri.7.4 evening services were altered to allow for work in the South Kensington - Footscray area. From 20 32 down Williamstown and Werribee suburban trains terminated at North Melbourne, with buses connecting to Footscray to join trains originating there. From 20 20 down St Albans trains from the city were cancelled. Service was provided by Broadmeadows trains running 4 minutes later, changing at North Melbourne into buses connecting to West Footscray, where trains were reversing. The 20 25 up Sunbury railmotor ran via the goods lines from Sunshine to South Kensington. The 21 20 down Sunbury was replaced with a bus. Presumably the *Overland* and all late evening Geelong services worked via the goods lines, with the Geelong trains continuing via Brooklyn. On Thurs.30.3 trains were terminating in the up platform at West Footscray. They used the facing crossover at the down end of the station. The crossover is worked from the signal box and has a dwarf signal for moves across it, but had to be clipped by an employee for each facing movement. Buses arrived in the goods yard adjacent to the down platform. Signs to direct passengers were plentiful and clear; clear announcements were made over the station public-address system. The 23 30 down Geelong pass. went by on the goods lines at 23 44. With the 30 minute interval evening timetable, up suburbans were due at 11 and 41, downs at 07 and 37. The 23 41 up arrived at 23 46. The bus replacing the 11 20 down service due at 23 20, connecting with the 11 24 down Broadmeadows at North Melbourne, arrived at 23 48. The up bus departed at 23 50 and the down suburban at 23 53.

At Footscray, trains were terminating in the up platform at 02 and 32 and forming down trains at 04 and 34.

Long Island steel trains: Sightings for March listed hereunder:

	03 00 (9334)	10 30 (9529)
Wed.1.3.	S317-T371	X41
Thurs.2.3.	S307-X50-T395	X36
Fri.3.3.	X44-T368	B75
Sat.4.3.	C508-704-967 (High Light)	X50-X34
Mon.6.3.	No train	X40
Tues.7.3.	S300-S310-T382	T387-T361
Wed.8.3.	G511	T393
Thurs.9.3.	S311-S310-T397	X31
Fri.10.3.	X36	B80-X41
Sat.11.3.	X31-X47-T361	X41
Mon.13.3.	No train	B80
Tues.14.3.	S306-C508	X34
Wed.15.3.	No train	No train
Thurs.16.3.	S311-X34-T408	X44
Fri.17.3.	T394-T353	T400-T390-X50
Sat.18.3.	S311-S306-T390	X44
Mon.20.3.	No train	X44
Tues.21.3.	S300-T380	X36
Wed.22.3.	T369-T372-S302	B65-T390
Thurs.23.3.	X51-G534	X42-S313
Fri.24.3.	No train	No train
Sat.25.3.	No train	X54-X48
Mon.27.3.	No train	No train
Tues.28.3	G515-G530	X54-X48
Wed.29.3.	G527-X53	B75

Extra steel trains for March:

Mon.6.3. X54-X50. Tues.7.3. X49-X34. Wed.8.3. X49-X34.

Thurs.16.3. X50-B64. Sat.18.3. T400-T399-X40.

Tues.21.3. X38-T368.

No.3 Club Car: On Wed.15.2. this car was lit but not operating and was worked to Adelaide behind 2PCO on the *Overland*. No.2 Club Car was operating in the normal position in the consist.

Spencer Street goods?: On Thurs.16.2. X34-10xVHHF /VHGF (grain) arrived at platform 2 Spencer Street at 20 55. X34 ran around and departed at 21 05.

A class through the Loop: On Fri.24.2. the 06 05 (8412) up Bairnsdale pass., hauled by A73, was accidentally routed via the City Loop to Spencer Street. The train had to continue to Flinders Street to reverse then via North Melbourne reversing loop to have the carriage set facing the correct way. This was not the first diesel hauled train through the loop as T320 worked an enthusiast trip in 1988.

Spencer Street sightings: Observations listed hereunder:

Tues.21.2. The down *Sydney Express* consisted of G521-MHN2364-VFK273-VBK261-VFR215-VRS232-PHN2368-MBY2581-MBY2575. The entire sitting portion comprised of V/Line liveried cars. A sign of things to come? On Thurs.24.2 VBK263 was replaced with a blue VFK. The 21 35 *Overland* consisted of N465-X46-AMBP264L-*No.5 State*-PCO2-*Malkari-Tantini-No.2. Club-Dorai-Juki-Paiti*-AJ1-BJ6-RBJ3-BJ4-CO2.

Tues.7.3. T377 on 18 30 (8329) down Seymour pass.

Wed.8.3. X49-X34 on down Long Island steel at 18 00.

Fri.10.3. X36 on 20 45 (8288) up Geelong empty cars.

Tues.14.3. T371 on 18 30 (8329) down Seymour pass. T394-T392 on 14 45 (9482) up Korumburra goods at 18 48. G521-8173 on 20 00 (8625) *Sydney Express.*

Sat.18.3. The 21 35 *Overland* was hauled by the unusual combination N464-S310-N471. As far as can be ascertained this is the first sighting of an S class in this combination.

Sun.19.3. The 21 15 down *Vinelander* consisted of N451-2xVMAP motorails-SJ282-SJ284-Z57-D-No.5 State-*Goulburn.* No.5 State Car was conveying the Governor of Victoria.

Mon.20.3. T369 on 18 30 (8329) down Seymour pass.

Mon.21.3. S317-X44 on 09 00 (9440) up Morwell briquette at 13 04. A73-X47 on 17 47 (8131) down Ballarat pass.

Wed.22.3. B65-T390 on 16 20 (9345) up Long Island empty slab at 18 05. T367-94M-1962T-103M to Jolimont Workshops from Bendigo at 18 31.

Thurs.23.3. S313-X42 on 16 20 (9345) up Long Island empty slab at 18 15. N454-T406-T400 on 18 35 (9420) down Traralgon goods at 19 05. N474-X47 on 19 55 (8331) down Albury pass. X44 on 17 00 (8438) up Sale pass. T407-S310 on 19 50 (9341) down empty Apex quarry ex Westall at 20 08.

Sat.25.3. Down *Sydney Express* had normal 17 vehicle consist with a mixture of sleeping and sitting cars. Normally an MHN joint stock van leads the consist, but in this case a V/Line van VHN241 was in its place. A special train of 4 Steamrail cars plus *Moorabool* and *Murray* hauled by K153 conveyed the Porsche Car Club to Bacchus Marsh.

Sun.26.3. The 19 50 down Ballarat pass. consisted of N472-N455-N453-N13-N19.

Tues.28.3. A70-X43 on 07 55 (8105) down Dimboola pass.

Wed.29.3. X31-X51 on 17 47 (8131) down Ballarat pass. T390 on 17 30 (8056) up Sunbury pass.

A day at Sunshine: On Wed.29.3. the following observations of interest were noted:

N466-G513: up express goods (25=75) at 06 26.

G522-G523: up express goods (39=105) at 06 39 (s.g.).

X47-BL31: up express goods (22=66) at 07 15.

N475-S317: up pass. (7) at 08 47 (Bendigo).

B80: up Apex (10=20) at 10 31.

B80: down Apex (10=20) at 13 18.

B80: up Apex (10=20) at 18 08.

X45-G515: down express goods (28=84) at 18 59.

P17-P12: up pass. (7) at 19 07 (SH-LH loco each end.)

X31: down express goods (30=60) at 18 46 (from Geelong to Bendigo empty sleeper wagons).

X47-BL31: down express goods (25=75) at 19 59.

S311-T369: down oil (15=31) at 20 35.

C503-BL32: down express goods (33=92) at 21 03.

Rollingstock

LOCOMOTIVES

Locomotives under repair: On Thurs.9.2. the following locomotives were noted inside Newport Workshops.

* T374 Being stripped prior to overhaul and repaint.
* C501 Engine, generator and turbocharger removed. Stripped of many fittings. Major overhaul and air-conditioner installation to be undertaken.
* C507 On blocks with bogies removed due to cracks in bolsters and underframe which are being repaired.
* T409 Overhauled in September 1988 but defective engine requires major work. Paint touch-up necessary.
* X32 Being stripped prior to overhaul. Will become the first V/Line main line locomotive to be overhauled and repainted at Newport.
* Y125 Ballarat Workshops pilot, repainted Bendigo in 1987. Being stripped prior to overhaul and repaint.
* Y136 Newport Workshops pilot, repainted 1986. Major overhaul and repaint completed.
* Y174 Overhaul completed and in the process of assembly. Requires repaint.

H class: As from Fri.13.1. H class locomotives are permitted to work over all lines approved for N class with the same load rating as a T class. Members of the class (five strong) have been sighted at Mildura and Portland.

PASSENGER

Newport Workshops: On Thurs.9.2. carriage sets N1, N12, SH31 and 4 car SH25 were in the Workshops undergoing overhaul. N1 is the only set being repainted, bringing all N sets into the grey roof livery. Dining car *Murray* was also there for repair to the air-conditioning and will be classified as RS236 on a new plate welded to its body. Harris trailers 886T, 880T and 885T were inside being stripped and strengthened prior to rebuild.

Spotswood: 878T and 882T were noted at Spotswood on Sun.12.2. being stripped and strengthened. 556T was present but had not been touched. 1581M and 1594M were sighted but their fate is unknown.

D vans: Several D vans were outshopped from both Ballarat and Bendigo Workshops in February. D302, 303, 352, 353, 355, 356, 357, 358, 360, 361 have all been seen freshly painted.

K set: In November 1988, the four ex-AN steel K cars were red carded due to being overdue for their lifting. The set was replaced on the roster by an SH set from the pool of spares. On Sat.25.2, BKL3 and BK2 were at North Melbourne Workshops. It is believed all four cars will be lifted and the complete set eventually returned to service.

Works

WORKS AND SERVICES

Ballarat: A series of minor works has been underway. The room on the down platform which had been used for heating footwarmers has been cleared and prepared for lining. The new road to the locomotive depot has been placed in service on about Fri.13.1. The gates at Humffray Street are now protected by a disc signal for each direction. The preliminary works in Victoria Street at the former Buninyong line bridge have reached a further stage. In December 1988, it was ironic that pickets on the fence were replaced. By late February, the filling in the cutting had extended to the point of the convergence of the cuttings for the main and branch lines.

Bendigo Workshops: The State Government is to spend $3.4 million on upgrading the North Bendigo Workshops over the next 2 years. As part of V/Line's corporate plan, which runs until 1992, the workshops will assume a specialised role as a wagon maintenance workshop whilst Newport will concentrate on carriage and locomotive maintenance. Ballarat will perform general purpose work. The government has committed $2 million to the upgrading of Bendigo this financial year. The bulk of the money will be spent on re-organising the lay-out of the workshops and will include the installation of two new 15 tonne cranes, a new machine shop and the existing carpentry shop will be joined to a joinery shop. Wagon traversers will be provided to transport the wagons to their place of maintenance.

Hamilton: No.1 road has been realigned to eliminate the bend at the Ararat end of the platform. The dead end extensions at both the up and down end of No.2 road have been removed. The main line points are fitted with miniature electric staff locks. Both mechanisms are marked 'ex-Nowingi'. A padlocked derail is fitted at both the up and down end of No.2 road. There are three other roads; a loop siding besides the goods shed, a loop siding behind the freight centre (for briquette unloading) and a short dead end siding off the briquette loop for unloading bitumen tankers. All signal posts have been removed. The stockyard branch at Coleraine Junction is still spiked but otherwise intact.

Dennington: All staff locks, the annett lock and associated equipment have been removed. Hinged derails have been provided at the Warrnambool end of the yard. The rodded derails at each end have also been removed.

Toolamba: A recent visit to the area revealed the following alterations:

* The platform road has been removed.
* The platforming road, No.2 road, water column and goods shed have been removed.

* A loop siding remains, probably to allow Tatura and Kyabram goods trains to "run around".
* The main line now runs straight through.
* The signal gantry and water tower remains.

Williamstown Beach: Between late September 1988 and February 1989 the following renovations have been completed.

* The old type heavy wooden barrier gates on both platforms have been replaced with lighter wrought iron gates.
* The up platform booking office has a new wooden floor.
* Toilets are fitted with wrought iron gates that are locked at night.
* The slate roof on both sides of both station buildings has been replaced with corrugated iron sheeting.
* The verandahs on both the up and down platforms have been re-covered with corrugated iron.
* Timetables, now covered in graffiti, are displayed opposite the booking window.

Closed lines East Natimuk area: Observations of the area made during the latter part of March revealed the following:

* At East Natimuk a large number of recovered sleepers were stacked for transport in the station yard. There are also a large number of new sleepers in the yard.
* East Natimuk - Noradjuha: All rails and sleepers removed except for those sleepers which are stacked to be burnt at the end of the fire season.
* Noradjuha - Jallumba: Rails have been removed but sleepers still have to be recovered. Some sleepers have been lifted at farm gateways. Grain and goods sheds still exist at Jullumba.
* Mitre to Gymbowen: Sleepers stacked and tied for transport. Some of the rejected sleepers have been burnt.
* Mitre - Natimuk: All materials have been either recovered or burnt. The lines still have to be lifted at rail crossings, the exception being that crossing between Mitre and Duffholme where the crossing has been removed and the road reformed. All grain silos still exist but are now served by road transport.
* The East Natimuk - Natimuk line now finishes just over the level crossing, with the crossing barred by sleepers spiked to the track.
* All bridges, which appear intact, have been placed out of use by the placement of a sleeper wall at each end.

Moulamein - Deniliquin visit: On Fri.31.3 a visit to the area revealed the following:

* Moulamein: Arrival signal from Balranald line is still operable but glass is smashed. All that remains of station and platform is a large mound of dirt. Arrival signal for trains coming from Echuca is in good condition, glass is complete.
* Balranald: Rails are heavily overgrown.
* Burraboi: Large wheat storage facilities here. Mallee shed with seat and telephone remains.
* Wakool: Only station left standing on this branch and it is in excellent condition. Two workman's sleepers and two HD wagons here. The HD wagons were on the ground minus their underframes and wheels. Sleepers are loaded here.
* Deniliquin: No station but modern V/Line office adjoins goods shed. K176 still stands on the old turntable beyond the station area. The Station Master revealed that the whole yard is to be simplified this year. He commented on how there used to be 40 men at Deniliquin, now there are only two. Down arrival signal (semaphore) and down outer home arrival (electric) remain.
* Mathoura: Departmental office (once part of former station now demolished) remains where the building used to be. Water tank and column are still in place. Water tank is full but not connected to column. Main track has been moved about a metre from where it used to be and so water column if useable would not reach the engine anyway. Sleepers are also loaded here.
* Barnes: Concrete tank contains safeworking equipment. Junction arrival and both branch arrival signals are still used. Electric departure signal for branch trains are still there.
* Moama: Station, platform and goods shed still remain. Station is used by Apex. The platform is in reasonable condition.

TENDERS

Recent tenders called on behalf of V/Line include:

* Purchase and removal of rail wagons located at Melbourne East yard.
* Alterations to the Stawell railway station.
* Dismantling, salvage, purchase and removal of specified rail released from the Nowingi - Millewa South closed railway line.
* Sale and removal of telegraph poles and lines from the Korong Vale - Ultima and Korong Vale - Wycheproof lines.
* Clearance of all released sleepers from the Gheringhap - Maroona line between Pura Pura and Maroona.
* Purchase, dismantling and clearance of rail, rail fasteners and sleepers from the livestock sidings in Benalla yard.
* Supply and delivery of one hydraulically operated reach-stacker or alternatively, one hydraulically operated forklift truck of 35 000 kg SWL capacity.
* Supply of monorail material handling system for use in the axle box assembly area at Newport Workshops.
* Purchase and removal of a V/Line brick building at Stawell.
* Purchase and removal of the V/Line goods shed at Yaapeet.
* Purchase and removal of the V/Line goods shed at Beulah.
* Purchase and removal of 90 000 litre capacity water tank and stand at Serviceton.
* Purchase and removal of stockyards at Sheephills.
* V/Line will soon be seeking to carry shipping containers with contract road vehicles between the railhead and customers in the Ballarat area. Operators who consider they have the necessary experience are invited to submit registrations of interest.
* Dismantling, salvage, purchase and removal of Moulamein - Balranald closed railway line.
* Sale of gantry crane no.1 and gantry crane no.4, both of 5 tonne capacity from Newport Workshops.

Official Opening of Echuca Bridge

GRANT PAYNE

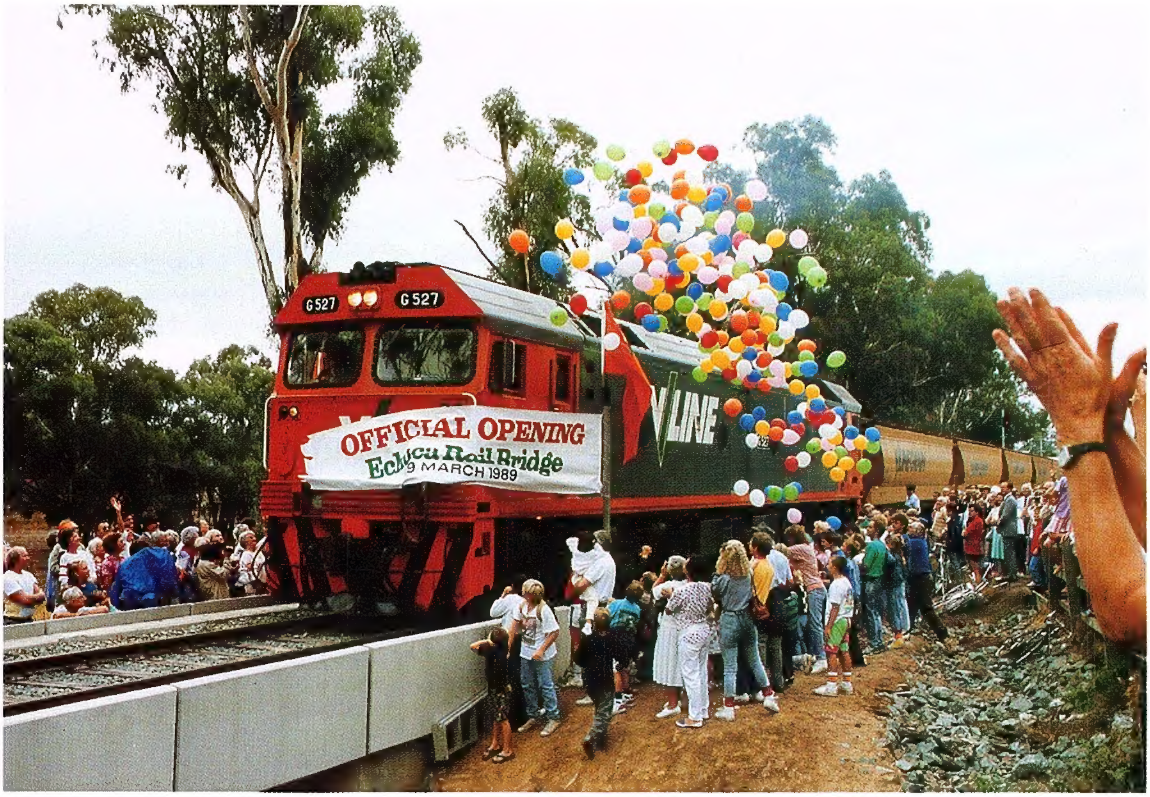
Although trains had been running over the new Echuca bridge into NSW for about a month, the impressive $7.5 million concrete bridge had not been officially opened. So, on a drizzly March 19 morning a small but enthusiastic crowd of about 30 people, including a five piece band, eagerly awaited the arrival of the official train. At 11 20, right on time, N459, N463, 8BJ, 3AJ, No.3 Club Car, 10BJ and *Norman* arrived at Echuca station. (N459 is named *City of Echuca.*) The train-load of guests moved to the V/Line buses which took them across the road bridge to Moama and returned to the Victorian side of the river so as to give the guests a good view of the new rail bridge. The buses then drove to a spot under the new structure on the Victorian side of the river where a large marquee had been set up for the guests, in which they would hear speeches and enjoy their lunch.

The Victorian Minister for Transport Mr Jim Kennan, along with several other guests, made a speech and then unveiled a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion. While this had been happening, a spotlessly clean G527 with approximately 40 empty VHGYs in tow had proceeded to the start of the bridge where a banner was stretched across the track. Mr Kennan then gave the word and with a long blast on the horn the train broke through the banner, watched by some 100 people. With photos safely secured a few other railfans and I sprinted to the other end of the bridge to see the train roll into NSW. The train had paused, for an unknown reason, on the bridge, making this photographic opportunity possible. The train crossed the bridge at 12 37. The G class then roared away towards Moama and took the empty wagons on to Caldwell.

The official guests stayed in their marquee and were entertained by a band. The crowd had moved to a position near the old VR pumpshed where they were entertained by the police band. There was also a small market set up and V/Line Travel had set up their promotional caravan, which attracted quite a few onlookers.

Meanwhile, back at the station *Norman* had been turned and the engines had run around their consist, with N463 now leading. N459 had been shut down, but was started up again about half an hour prior to departure. The buses collected the passengers from the river area and ferried them back to the train. Then, at 16 14, four minutes late, the train left Echuca, with *Norman's* round end trailing. So ended a great day, although many people were surprised that the passenger train had not entered NSW. As a matter of interest the G class was the first of its class to go over the bridge, but B, T and X class locos had previously worked trains over the new bridge. The G class returned to Echuca light engine from Caldwell and departed Echuca on an up goods the following day, Monday 20 March.

G527 hauls the first official train over the new Echuca rail bridge on Sun.19.3.89. (L Sutton)



Preservation

BELLARINE PENINSULA RAILWAY

Bellarine Peninsula Railway: Locomotive M6 has re-entered service and looks attractive in its TGR red livery. T251 continues to run but is in need of some repair. DP29 is due to enter workshops for repair followed by DP28. Drysdale station was completed to the frame stage by Fri.20.1. As well as the station building, installation of a water tank, relaying of some track and a general cleanup is required.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS TOURIST RAILWAY

The restoration of 91RM is nearing completion, with external painting, new lino and the refitting of seats the final tasks to complete. All the windows have been re-rubbered and sealed with silicone, parts of the frame replaced or strengthened and three quarters of the internal masonite replaced. Both the 1st and 2nd class cars have been painted internally.

Mechanically the main task over the past six months was the replacement of the 1st speed brake bands in both gearboxes. This involved the removal of both gearboxes and their total disassembly, which is not an easy job. With both the track and 91 RM nearing completion test trips to Musk should hopefully begin in the next four months.

Our present rollingstock consists of:

91RM — a 280hp Walker Railcar. (1951).
32RM — a 153hp Walker Railcar (1953).
56MT — a Walker Railcar Trailer (1953).
63RM — a Diesel Electric Railmotor (1930).
26MT — a Diesel Electric Railmotor Standard Trailer (1930).
53RM — a Double Ended Leyland Railmotor (1926).
1RT — former Massey Ferguson Rail Tractor (1962).

Dates are of the particular vehicle's placement into service.

DIESELRAIL

A meeting on 14th March 1989 of interested persons confirmed the establishment of DieselRail to co-ordinate the retention and preservation of diesel locomotives for use on the Victorian main line system. It is anticipated that two each of the veteran B and S class streamline diesel electrics will be secured, one of each as operating engines, the others kept as standby units. Similarly, retention of the economical to use T class locos is being considered; these like the K class steam, are expected to be the 'bread and butter' earners for the preservationists. With the progressive contraction of the V/Line diesel fleet, sometimes no spare locos will be available for special charter trips, and so those retained by DieselRail will have a ready market. The new group will operate as a Division of Steamrail Victoria on a similar basis to the ElecRail Division. As such, it will be able to take over the haulage of special non-steam charter trips which utilise Steamrail carriages and number some 20 outings annually with prospect of further growth. The identity of the actual locomotives to be selected will be dependent upon the operating condition of each unit when withdrawn from regular service. With some 70 persons seeking foundation membership, the future augurs well for DieselRail in the preservation of another important aspect of Victorian railway history.

R766 SYNDICATE

Newsrail readers have no doubt been wondering about the fate of 4-6-4, Hudson, R766 which was salvaged from a park near Bendigo station and restored as the 'City of Bendigo' in 1985 by Steam Age Australia Pty Ltd for use on the *Melbourne Limited* tourist train. After the financial failure of Steamage and the *Melbourne Limited,* the locomotive was acquired by Australian Vintage Travel who had no use for it when they converted the carriage fleet to standard gauge operation on the Southern Cross Express upmarket tourist train diesel hauled between Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. After a financial disaster estimated at $15 million, AVT, one of the illfated Victorian Economic Development Corporation's failed projects, which included the *South Steyne* Sydney steam ferry and a DC3 airliner, was placed in liquidation and the assets put up for sale.

Subsequently, 14 members of Steamrail Victoria formed a syndicate in an endeavour to retain the locomotive in Victoria for future mainline excursion traffic. The group, known as the R766 Syndicate was successful during March 1989 in purchasing the Hudson for $69,000, a good price considering the prohibitive costs involved in restoring another R class when the need arises. The liquidator received two other enquiries about R766; one from Sydney did not proceed due to high costs associated with converting the loco from broad gauge to standard gauge.

R766 has had a number of parts removed and is generally run down, even though it was restored only four years ago. In addition to a boiler inspection, it is anticipated that firebox repairs will be required before R766 can return to service. In due course, it is expected that a lease type of agreement will be formulated by the R766 Syndicate with Steamrail to operate the locomotive which is currently stored at the Steamrail Depot, Newport.

HARRIS TRAIN

The following vehicles are to be retained to form a 7-car preserved Harris train: 1522M, 798M, 799M, 2515T, 2606T, 2850T, 883T.

Until now it had appeared that no Harris rollingstock would be preserved in either static or operable form due to the high cost involved removing the asbestos from the car bodies. Those cars containing this material are to be de-asbestosed in a special building at Newport Workshops. Because of the considerable work which requires almost complete rebuilding after being stripped down to the body shell to remove the asbestos the train is not expected to be operable until late 1989. Although the selection of the various cars has been dictated by those still surviving in good operable condition, fortunately examples of each of the different types of Harris rollingstock have been retained. Some of the cars presently covered in graffiti could be mistaken for pop-art trams. Restoration will involve repainting in the true old VR royal blue with gold lining livery. This major project which coincides with the 70th anniversary of Melbourne electrification 1919-1989, is being undertaken by The Met, which reconfirms that Victoria leads the world in suburban electric preservation. The ElecRail Division of Steamrail is liaising with The Met in the restoration project.

Taildisc

OBITUARY – LESLIE ARTHUR REYNOLDS 1905-1988

Leslie Reynolds, a former Victorian Commissioner of Railways, died on 27 December 1988 after a short illness. Les Reynolds' career began in 1924 when as a first year university student he obtained a position as an indentured pupil engineer with the Victorian Railways. On completion of an honors degree in engineering Les commenced full time work with the railways.

Les's early years on the VR were spent on the designing of bridges for various sites around Melbourne. A transfer within the railways led Les to become the assistant engineer on the regrading works between Glenorchy and Ararat during 1933/4. Completion of this work allowed much heavier freight trains to climb the grades to Ararat. A description of this regrading project appeared in *Bulletin* No. 355, May 1967.

During part of the Depression, Les Reynolds was placed on reduced time. By careful arrangement he was able to combine his Victorian employment with a part time position with the Emu Bay Railway Company in Tasmania. There he designed, and supervised the construction of, the Pieman River bridge.

Between 1938 and 1952 Les Reynolds held a number of appointments as a relieving engineer and a District Engineer in all parts of the state. During this time he prepared the handbook for the Hallade track testing machine.

Appointed Engineer for Special Works in 1952, Les became deeply involved with the civil engineering facets of Operation Phoenix. This led to the first of three overseas trips Les made to study modern railway practice. On the retirement of Alec Taylor in 1955, Les became the Chief Civil Engineer, the senior person in the Way and Works Branch. Les held this position for 12 years. During this period he oversaw the introduction of mechanised relaying of track and mechanised cyclic maintenance of railway lines. Both these developments improved the condition of the state's railways and made significant reductions in the expenses incurred by the track. Mechanised relaying was introduced to Australia in Victoria.

Les Reynolds' proposal to the Warner committee for an underground railway in Melbourne later became the substance of the project, which was not completed until the 1980s. In 1962 the standard gauge railway between Wodonga and Melbourne was opened. The line followed the route selected by Les Reynolds. This project was the first of a series which brought Les into contact with the ARHS and other people of kindred interests. O S Nock in *Railways of Australia* referred to Les Reynolds' involvement in the re-opening of the *Puffing Billy* railway services from Belgrave. This line is now a major tourist attraction in the Dandenong Ranges.

Les's third overseas trip, in 1964, was devoted to the study of automated hump marshalling yards. Seven years later Les Reynolds saw the completion of a new goods classification yard in Melbourne. This project, which led to the replacement of an antiquated yard, was particularly important for it was completed without interruption to freight services. Within a few years the investment in the new works had been returned through reduced operating expenses.

When appointed Commissioner in 1967, Les Reynolds retained a particular interest in special works. Work focussed on the completion of the new hump yard led to his retirement being postponed on several occasions. In retirement from the VR Les took a position with the East African Railways, in which he worked on the design of a new freight yard at Mombasa. Later he worked as a consultant for the British Phosphate Commission.

READERS' QUESTIONS

The news editor has received several queries and would appreciate any person with the knowledge, to supply answers.

* What was the reason for extending the Puffing Billy line at Lakeside by 170 metres?

* What is the story behind the privately owned carriage *Duke of Gloucester*?

* What upgrading is necessary to the C class locomotive cab in order to make it acceptable for use in NSW.

* 'Koni' dampers. What are they and how do they work?

* Over what lines in Victoria have AN 930 class locomotives worked?

* What is a 'puller out'? Is it a railway occupation?

APOLOGY

Newsrail, March 1989, p.75, features an article 'A writer's impression of an N class trip from Adelaide'. This article was supplied by J Insall who was unfortunately not credited at the time.

ODD SPOTS

* In November 1938, what is believed to be the first organised railfan tour in Victoria took place. The fixture was a round trip in a chartered petrol-electric railcar to Heathcote Junction via the new freight lines through Footscray and Broadmeadows. A stop was made at Heathcote Junction to observe the *Spirit of Progress* at speed. From there it proceeded through Kilmore, Heathcote to Bendigo and returned to Melbourne on the main northern line. Lunch at Bendigo, tea at Woodend and home at 20 00. Eleven hours travel, over 400 km for $1.50. Those were the days!

* When the new rail bridge over the Murray River at Echuca opened for revenue traffic on Fri.3.2 there was a strong rumour that local locomotive drivers were insistant they be allowed to drive the SECOND train across.

* An extra length of rail line has been laid on the Port of Echuca railway line. This line was supposed to have been reinstated by March 1989 as part of a Bicentennial project. It is estimated now that only 99.9% of the project remains to be completed. It would appear the logical course is to convert the operation into a Tricentennial project.

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